
Indigenous Efforts and Dimensions of Mongolian Buddhism
—Exemplified by the Mergen Tradition—

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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March 2009

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Declaration

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Abstract

Indigenous Efforts and Dimensions of Mongolian Buddhism — Exemplified by the Mergen Tradition —

Uranchimeg Borjigin Ujeed

This thesis investigates the indigenous efforts and dimensions of Mongolian Buddhism on the local and practical levels exemplified by the Mergen Tradition of Inner Mongolia, China. The Mergen Tradition is a set of local Buddhist practices centred in Mergen Monastery, in which Buddhism was practised purely in the Mongolian language. The Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism has survived until the present and its influence has been disseminating to other parts of both Inner Mongolia and Mongolia. The thesis proceeds from general discussion to specific studies, as follows:

Chapter 1 provides a historical overview of the influence and development of Buddhism in Mongolia. It proceeds from Mongols' different levels of interaction with Buddhism to their two national conversions to Tibetan Buddhism. Chapter 2 examines the most common overarching features of Mongolian Buddhism from two main perspectives: single school Gelukpa Buddhism established under Manchu political control and Tibetan spiritual dominance, and the Mongolisation of Buddhist doctrine through Mongolian literary works. Chapter 3 describes the initiation of the Neichi Toyin Line in eastern Mongolia and its use of the Mongolian language instead of Tibetan. Chapter 4 explores the origin, formation and institutionalisation of the Mergen Tradition. Chapter 5 investigates the reasons why such a unique tradition was able to form and persevere under Manchu political control and Tibetan religious dominance. Chapter 6 introduces the practices of the Mergen Tradition by examining Mergen Gegen's publications, including the monastic services he regulated, his liturgical texts, and his works on Vajrabhairava Tantra. Chapter 7 investigates Mergen Gegen's popularisation of Buddhism in the lay community, which became an important element in the Mergen Tradition.

This Thesis illustrates the Mongols' efforts and achievements in indigenising Buddhism while not corrupting it.

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Acknowledgements

I am grateful to all the teachers who were involved in my study at SOAS, which provided me with a wonderful academic environment and the facilities to work on my PhD.

My special gratitude goes to my supervisor, Dr. Tadeusz Skorupski, whose consistent support made this thesis possible. Not only did he guide me to embark on postgraduate studies, but also was instrumental in securing funding from the Overseas Research Studentship and the Sutasoma Trust. My knowledge of Buddhism was enormously enriched and deepened through his lectures and seminars. I also thank Professor Timothy Barrett and Dr. Ulrich Pagel for their comments and suggestions on my thesis topic.

I am extremely grateful to Dr. Carole Pegg and Miss Anne Henochowicz, who have generously offered their precious time to edit this thesis.

In addition to the Overseas Research Studentship and the Sutasoma Trust, I am grateful to the University of London Central Research Fund for supporting my research of primary sources.

I express my gratitude towards my whole family who have supported me through my studies. My husband Hurelbaatar's instigation and encouragement, my two children, Sangseraima and Ochirbat's empathy, and their help with English, and my mother-in-law's help at home enabled me to fulfil my goals.

A note on transliteration

No one transliteration system for Mongolian has been agreed on by scholars. The transliteration system employed here, in its alphabetical order, is as follows:

Vowels: a e i o u ö ü

Consonants: n b p kh/k ġ/g m l s sh t d ch j y r w (v)

Among these, u [ʊ] and ü [ø] represent the sounds which are not found in English.

Mongols have used several scripts in the past. Until 1941, most documents were written in the Uyghur Script, also known as Vertical Script and Old Mongolian Script. Inner Mongolians continue to use the Uyghur Script; the Cyrillic Script was introduced in Outer Mongolia in 1941 and also known as New Mongolian Script. Since this study covers the period mostly from 13th century to the beginning of the 20th century, I follow the traditional Uyghur script spelling for Mongolian terms and names. I use 'Chinggis Khan' instead of 'Genghis Khan' because this usage is historically correct and strongly preferred by both the Mongols themselves and also increasingly by western writers on Mongolian history. Unless otherwise noted, foreign names are Mongolian in this thesis.

Mongols have devised a unique pronunciation system for Tibetan words in their own monastic education and practices. This system is characterised by linking together all the syllables in a word and by pronouncing some silent postscripts and prescripts. Some sounds that do not exist in Mongolian are given equivalent Mongolian pronunciation, and some vowels are changed to fit Mongolian vowel harmony. For example, the Third Dalai Lama's name, Bsod nams rgya mtsho, is pronounced 'Sodnomjamsu'. The title *dge bskos* is pronounced as *gebküi*.

All Mongol monks have Tibetan names, and many lay people also preferred to take on Tibetan and Sanskrit names. For the names of important figures, I give the Tibetan or Sanskrit spelling of their names in brackets, and for the others, I just follow Mongolian spelling.

For Tibetan, I follow the system known as Wylie transliteration as follows:

ཀ ka ཁ kha ག ga ལ nga

ཅ ca ཆ cha ཇ ja ཉ nya

ཏ ta ཐ tha ཌ da ཎ na

པ pa ཕ pha བ ba མ ma

ཙ tsa ར tsha ལ dza ས wa

ཞ zha ཟ za འ 'a ཡ ya

ར ra ལ la ཤ sha ས sa

ཧ ha ཨ a

For Sanskrit terms and names, I follow the standard IAST (International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration) for personal names, and terms such as text titles, deity or place names in bracket after Mongolian spelling.

Chinese terms and names are given in the Pinyin system and Simplified Chinese characters. Abbreviations for these languages are: Mon., Tib., Skt. and Chi. respectively.

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Introduction

1. Aim

This thesis aims to investigate the indigenous efforts and dimensions of Mongolian Buddhism exemplified by the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhist practices.

Mongols have been devoted to Buddhism since their second conversion in the late 16th century. The Russian scholar Pozdneyev, citing from the Lazarist Father E. R. Huc, writes:

The Mongols are, indeed, an essentially religious people; with whom the future life is everything; the thing of this world is nothing. They live in the world, as they were not of it. We see how deeply Lamaism has struck root in their midst, more so than any other Buddhist country. This means that Buddhism is now guiding not only all acts but also all judgement and intentions of the Mongols (Pozdneyev [1887] 1978: 17).

Mongolian Buddhism has at least 800 years of history since the religion's first introduction in the 13th century. After the second wave starting from the 16th century, Buddhism gradually became the national religion and spread throughout ethnic Mongolian territory including Mongolia, Inner Mongolia (China), Xinjiang (China), Buryatia (Russia), and Khalkha (Russia). According to Heissig, in the 19th century, there were about 1,200 Buddhist temples and monasteries in Inner Mongolia, and more than 700 in Outer Mongolia. A son from practically every family belonged to the clergy; it comprised about one-third of the entire population (1980: 1).¹ He also noted that there were a total of 243 reincarnated lamas in Mongolia (Heissig 1980: 34). Mongol lamas not only translated a large number of Buddhist texts from Tibetan into Mongolian, including the 108 volumes of Kanjur and 225 volumes of Tenjur, but also composed

¹ The terms 'Inner Mongolia' (Mon. *Öbür Mongᡔul*, *Dotogadu Mongᡔul*, Chi. *Nei Menggu* 内蒙古) and 'Outer Mongolia' (Mon. *Aru Mongᡔul*, *gadaᡔadu Mongᡔul*, Chi. *Wai Menggu* 外蒙古) stem from the distinction between the 'inner rulers' (*dotugatu jasaᡓ*) who occupied the land south of the Gobi Desert, and the 'outer rulers' (*gadaᡔadu jasaᡓ*) who ruled the north of the Gobi, the centre of the Mongolian plateau, as well as those in present-day Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Qinghai Province under the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912). Now, 'Inner Mongolia' refers only to the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in China, and does not include other Mongolian inhabited regions in China, such as those in the north-eastern Chinese provinces, or those in Xinjiang and Qinghai. 'Mongolia' (Mon. *Mongᡔul ulus*) is used to refer to the independent state of Mongolia. However, many Mongols and Han Chinese in China still refer to Mongolia as Outer Mongolia. As I deal with the Qing period, I use these terms in their historical sense. When 'Khalkha' is used, it also refers to Outer Mongolia, where Khalkhas are the dominant ethnic group. 'Mongolia' refers to the historical and geographical zone that Mongols inhabited before the fall of the Qing.

many works in both Tibetan and Mongolian. There were many highly learned Mongol monks whose scholarly works have contributed not only to Mongolian Buddhism, but also to Tibetan Buddhism and even to Buddhism beyond. The Mongolian monastic system and Buddhist practices continue to the present day, having endured communist suppression of practice and destruction of monasteries, and persecution of monks all over Mongolian inhabited regions including Mongolia, China and Russia. Furthermore, the Mongols played a vital historical role in the development of Tibetan Buddhism. The title of the 'Dalai Lama' (which means a lama great like an ocean) was first conferred by the Mongol ruler Altan Khan in the 16th century; the fourth Dalai Lama was found in Mongolia. Moreover, the Gelukpa School of Tibetan Buddhism established its rule in Tibet with the support of the western Mongols in the 17th century. After 70 years (30 years in Inner Mongolia) of suppression, Mongolian Buddhism has recently undergone a revival all over the Mongolian-inhabited areas of Mongolia, China and Russia.

Studies of Mongolian Buddhism may be classified into the following eight categories: (1) general descriptions of practices (Pozdneyev 1978 [1887]; Miller 1959; Heissig 1980; Sárközi 1992; 1995); (2) historical studies including present day revival (Jağchid 1988; Siklos 1991; Choiji 1994; Bulag 2003; Bareja-Starzyńska; Jerryson 2007); (3) socio-political studies (Petech 1950; Jağchid 1974; Moses 1977; Elverskog 2006; Jin 2006); (4) biographical studies (Heissig 1953; Bawden 1961; Choiji 1992; Elverskog 2003, 2008; Bareja-Starzyńska 2008; Kolmar-Paulenz 2008); (5) descriptions of monasteries (Altanorgil 1982; Togtungg-a 1985; Selhejab & Oyunbilig 1991; Möngke 1996; Chengeljab 2003); (6) analyses of texts (Heissig 1953; Cleaves 1954; Rachewiltz 1996); (7) and interactions between Buddhism and Mongolian indigenous religions (Heissig 1953; Tatár 1976; Bawden 1984; Sárközi 1984; Atwood 1996); (8) Bibliographical studies (Lobsang and Ürüntuyağ-a 1998; Byambaa 2004; These studies produced by both western and Mongolian scholars, have focused on the historical, socio-political and economic aspects of Mongolian Buddhism. Manuscripts and prints of Mongolian Buddhist texts have been catalogued (Heissig 1954; Rinchen 1964; Sazykin 1995; Otgonbaatar 1998; Ürinkirağ-a 1999), and archives of some monasteries have been published (Altanorgil 1989, 1982, 1983, 1988, 1989; Möngke 1995). Above is a rough categorization with some examples. It can not exhaust the growing scholarship and expanding themes of the studies of Mongolian Buddhism. For example, some

western scholars are very keen on further exploring the existence of so called Red Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism in Mongolia (Charleux 2002; Havnevik, Byambaa and Bareja-Starzyńska 2007);² Mongolian Buddhist art (Charleux 2003). However, studies of Mongolian Buddhism are still not as extensive as those of other Buddhist traditions, especially Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese. Perhaps the main reason for this gap is its close connection and resemblance to Tibetan Buddhism, from which it derived. As Heissig remarks:

A description of Lamaism among the Mongols would much resemble one of Lamaism in Tibet, for Lamaism in Mongolia remained spiritually dependent on Tibet, faithful to orthodox Lamaism. It is true that Mongolian lamas wrote significant theological works, but all this happened within the doctrinal structure of Lamaist church, and in the Tibetan language, and represented no special theological development (Heissig 1980: 1).

Indeed study of Mongolian Buddhism, rather than Tibetan Buddhism, is difficult to pursue. Some distinguished Mongolian lamas, such as Alashan Lharampa Agwandandar³, are considered simply as Tibetan Buddhists (Stcherbatsky 1984). Yet some questions may be raised which can only be approached from the perspective of Mongolian Buddhism. If other nations in Asia such as China, Tibet, Japan and Korea have developed their own version of Buddhism, why did Mongols not? What did the Mongols' practices of Buddhism entail? Were any practices distinctively Mongolian?

Bearing these questions in mind, this thesis aims to investigate the indigenous effort and dimensions of Mongolian Buddhism on a local and practical level rather than a doctrinal and theological level.

In order to do so, this thesis gives a close investigation of one specific tradition within the general context of Mongolian Buddhism. I call this tradition 'the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism.' This was a set of local Buddhist practices centred around Mergen Monastery, including about twenty affiliated monasteries of Urad Right

² Red tradition "sometimes refers to the unreformed school of Tibetan Buddhism (Rnying ma pa), while the other times the category is used to cover all the non-Gelukpa Tradition" (Havnevik, Byambaa and Bareja-Starzyńska 2007: 226).

³ An Inner Mongolian monk, Agwandandar, known as Dandar Lharamba (1759–1840), studied Buddhism in Bras-spung Monastery in Lhasa for twenty four years and became very influential in the study of Buddhist logic. Agwandandar composed fourteen independent books (wooden block prints that are still available in both Mongolian and Tibetan), most of which are commentaries on the works of Dignana and Dharmakīrti. Particularly, his work on Dharmakīrti was recognized by Stcherbatsky as the first commentary on the most essential question of epistemology and logic, more than a thousand years after its appearance.

Duke Banner⁴ in Inner Mongolia. I call it the 'Mergen' Tradition following the name of the main monastery, Mergen Monastery, in which it was practised, and the core figure of the tradition, Mergen Gegen, who was the chief incarnation lama in Mergen Monastery. The third Mergen Gegen, Lubsangdambijalsan (Tib. bLo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, 1717–1766, Mergen Gegen hereafter), was a great scholar who endeavoured to institutionalise the Mergen Tradition and made Buddhism truly Mongolian. I refer to Buddhist practices in Mergen Monastery before the Third Mergen Gegen as the 'Mergen Line of Mongolian Buddhist Practices.' Mergen Gegen not only institutionalised the 'Mergen Line of Mongolian Buddhist Practices' into a distinct 'Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism', but also invigorated the tradition with his copious writings. I call it the Mergen 'Tradition' because it has retained a consistent lineage, coherent, community over several centuries. In order to distinguish the Mergen Tradition, I refer to Buddhist practices in other parts of Mongolia as the 'Tibetan Line of Mongolian Buddhism,' based on the use of Tibetan as its main language in monastic services and study. This distinction is made purely to facilitate discussion.

The significance of the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism is as follows. Firstly, it is a tradition practised purely in the Mongolian language. Secondly, not only has the tradition survived until the present, but also rich text sources regarding the tradition are still available. Thirdly, the influence of the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism is spreading in both Inner Mongolia and Mongolia today. Although Tibetan Line of practice is still predominant in revival of Mongolian Buddhism it is difficult to revive to the degree as it was in the past due to its severe disruption during the communist era and present socio-political situation.

In short, the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism is a unique example of the Mongolisation of Buddhism. It is one of many cases of Mongolian Buddhism, but may serve to illustrate universal characteristics which were practised to different degrees at the local level.

⁴ A banner is a basic administrative unit which originated from the Manchu military system. Urad Right Duke Banner was one of the forty nine banners of Inner Mongolia during the Qing Dynasty. The banner system still exists in Inner Mongolia today. See chapter 4 for a historical sketch of Urad Right Duke Banner.

2. Structure

This thesis is a historical study focused on the pinnacle of Mongolian Buddhism during the 17th–20th centuries. It proceeds from a general discussion of Mongolian Buddhism to specific studies of the Mergen Tradition. The general discussion is a synthesis of previous studies and covers the whole historical period. My investigation of the Mergen Tradition is based solely on primary sources, mostly from the 18th–19th centuries, including Mergen Gegen's own works.

Chapter 1, is a historical sketch of Mongolian Buddhism. It starts from the different levels of interaction with Buddhism of the early peoples on the Mongolian Plateau, and then moves to the Mongols' two conversions to Tibetan Buddhism. The first conversion was during the Yuan Dynasty in the 13th century and the second started during the Northern Yuan period in the 16th century. In the Yuan, Buddhism was the state religion but only accepted by court nobles; the whole Mongol nation was converted to Buddhism during its second dissemination.

Chapter 2, examines the general features of Mongolian Buddhism from two main perspectives. The first is the external factors that set the overall framework of Mongolian Buddhism, which is Gelukpa-dominant Buddhism established under Manchu political control and Tibetan spiritual dominance'; the second is the Mongols' endeavour to transplant Buddhism in Mongolia through literary work. This section includes translations of scriptures and their original writings in Tibetan and Mongolian.

The thesis then moves on to investigate the Mergen tradition.

Chapter 3, describes the initiation of the Mongolian line of Buddhist practices by the First Neichi Toyin and his legacy. The Mergen Tradition originated from this line and has been closely connected to it throughout its development. Neichi Toyin's Mongolian Line of Buddhist practices emerged as an overt challenge to the Tibetan Line of Mongolian Buddhism, and led to a divergence from Manchu-designed and Tibetan-dominated Mongolian Buddhism. However, I do not directly call it the 'Neichi Toyin Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism' because it did not fully develop into a 'tradition' as did the later Mergen Tradition.

Chapter 4, explores the origin, formation and institutionalisation of the Mergen Tradition. At this stage, one sees the further divergence from the Tibetan Line Mongolian Buddhist practices and the formation of a unique tradition.

Chapter 5, investigates the reasons why such a unique tradition was able to form and continue to exist under the pressure of Manchu control and Tibetan dominance.

Chapter 6, examines the practices of this tradition based on Mergen Gegen's works. This chapter covers the monastic services regulated by Mergen Gegen and his liturgical texts, as well as works on the Vajrabhairava Tantra.

Chapter 7, investigates Mergen Gegen's works on the popularisation of Buddhism in the lay community, which was an important part of the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism. This chapter highlights the important issue of the indigenisation of Buddhism through the interaction between monastic and lay communities.

Sources and Methodology

This thesis is a historical study focused on the pinnacle of Mongolian Buddhism during the 17th–20th centuries. It proceeds from a general discussion to specific studies of the Mergen Tradition. My study is based solely on published materials. The general discussion is a synthesis of previous studies based mainly on secondary sources in Mongolian, Chinese and English, including the work of Heissig (1980), Delige (1998), Bulaḡ (2003, 2004), Atwood (2004), Choiji (1998, 2001), Jin (2006), Qiao Ji (2007). These generalised studies tend to systematise and standardise our knowledge about Mongolian Buddhism. I use these secondary sources to sketch the overall picture and general features of Mongolian Buddhism, which also serve as an overall context for my study of the specific Mergen Tradition.

My investigation of the Mergen Tradition is based mainly on primary sources in Mongolian from the 18th–19th centuries, including Mergen Gegen's own works. Among them, DCH, CHJ, DB, AT and CW4, which are the most important primary sources, have been put into new publications during the last two decades in Inner Mongolia. I obtained photocopies of the other primary sources which are held in libraries in Inner Mongolia. While DCH (biography of the First Neichi Toyin), CHJ (biography of the Second Neichi Toyin), TCH (biography of the and Third–Fifth Neichi Toyins),⁵ DB and

⁵An item found in Ürinkira-ḡa, No. 04757, the biography of the Third Neichi Toyin by Arigundalai Doruna-ki shashin-u jula bogda knas byu toyin blam-a-yin shiniin toḡatu rnam tar chedig khiged shashin-u degedü khaḡalḡ-a-dur orukhu itegel-urn khötülbüri luḡ-a mandal-un khötülbüri sösüg-ün tergetü chindamani-yin sang khemekhü nüḡüd orushib (Peking wooden block print), held in the Library of the Academy of Inner Mongolia Social Science. However, I was not able to get hold of its copy because the

DBA (chronicle of Mergen Monastery and West Monastery)⁶ provide information about the origin, formation and establishment of the Mergen Tradition and its internal and external relationships (Chapters 3, 4, and 5), CW4 (reprint from the photocopy of CW2) serves as the essential source for analysing the actual practice of the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism (Chapters 6 and 7). In addition, CW3, a new collection of Mergen Gegen's works, provides valuable additional materials for studying Mergen Gegen's popularisation of Buddhism among the lay community. CW1 and CW2 are the complete copy of the original wooden block print of Mergen Gegen's collected work held in the British Library. As some were placed out of order and the two sets of works were mixed when they were bound in the British Library, about 100 pages are missing in the second volume of CW4.⁷ Apart from its colophon, which provides very important information for looking at the relationship between the Mergen Tradition and the Khorchin, CW1 does not have much special information to provide because it merely is an extract of CW2. Although AT is a chronicle by the Third Mergen Gegen, it does not contain much information about Mongolian Buddhism. I used it mainly for finding out about Mergen Gegen's ideas about the identity of his tradition and its corresponding community; in other words, about Mongolian national identity and Buddhism. I obtained photocopies of EKH (Tsongkhapa's work on Vajrabhairava with thirteen retinues), MTCH (Jangjia Khutuḡtu Ngag dbang blo bzang chos ldan's work on Vajrabhairava) and CWPL (Panchen Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan's collected works) to compare with Mergen Gegen's corresponding works.

Sources on the Mergen Tradition have been collected and published, and studies have been carried out extensively by zealous local scholars following the restoration of Mergen Monastery in the 1990s. An editorial committee for Mergen Gegen Studies was organised by Professor Ü. Naranbatu, pioneered by Professor B. Möngke, and a series of books including DB and CW4, an introduction to the Mergen Monastery, Mergen Gengen's works and collected papers on Mergen Monastery and Mergen Gegen were

several people I asked were not able to find it. I was informed that it was going to be published soon with annotations. So I used some information of the Biography found in Khurchabilig (1997).

⁶ DBA is the fourth part of the original of DB. It is a manuscript bearing the same title as DB but was not included in the new Publication of DB by Möngke. I obtained a copy of it from the library of the Inner Mongolia Daily newspaper.

⁷ This means the photograph copy of CW2 used for reprinting CW4 did not include the part which was bound into CW1. I put them into the right order when I was working on the Collection of the old Mongolian books in the British Library in 2007. Now they are digitized in their right order.

published one after another in 1994–1997. B. Möngke's work (2004) can be seen as a culmination of studies of Mergen Gegen which summarises previous studies and Mergen Gegen's contributions.

All these works have provided me rich materials for my study of the Mergen Tradition. This thesis attempts to uplift the studies of the Mergen Tradition in both breadth and depth on the basis of these source materials and studies. In terms of breadth, the thesis investigates the Mergen Tradition within Mongolian socio-political and religious contexts. In depth, it is an analysis of the collected works of Mergen Gegen in order to explore the actual practices of the Mergen Tradition. In addition, Mergen Gegen's popular ritual texts are analysed within the context of the complete liturgies of Mergen Gegen, rather than looking at individual texts separately as previous studies have.

CHAPTER 1. Different levels of Mongol interaction with Buddhism

There has been a long history of Mongol interaction with Buddhism which, for reasons related to ethnicity, history and politics, has been diverse and complex. This chapter presents different levels of Mongol interaction with Buddhism in the process of the peoples' conversion to the faith. Before discussing Buddhism, it is necessary to map ethnic and political Mongolia, the context within which Mongolian Buddhism was formed and evolved.

1. Mapping ethnic and political Mongolia: Historical overview

Discussions in the West about Mongolia or the Mongols usually focus either on the 13th century Mongol conquest or on contemporary Mongolia, which is now an independent and democratic state. In fact, the definition of Mongolia and the Mongols has varied throughout the history. It will be helpful, therefore, to outline the complexity of ethnicity and politics in Mongolia.

A succession of empires ruled the Mongolian Plateau between the 3rd century BCE and 12th century CE, including the Hun (Xiongnu) Empire (3rd century BCE), Xianbei and Rouran (1st century BCE–5th century CE), Turkic (552–630 CE), Uyghur (630–840 CE) and Kitan Empires (917–1125 CE).

The origin of the Mongols has not yet been agreed upon. Although first mention of the Mongols is in a Chinese record of the 8th century, the name 'Mongol' became known to the world only when the Mongol Empire was established by Chinggis Khan (1167–1227), the son of the chief of the Mongol tribe, at the beginning of the 12th century. Before that, 'Mongol' had merely been a tribal name. After the establishment of the Mongol Empire (1206), the name referred to the union of the whole of the Mongolian Plateau: from Lake Baikal in the North to the Great Wall of China in the South, and from Mount Kinggan (Hingan) in the East to the Altai Mountains in the West. The different tribes included in this empire formed the base of the Mongolian nation. Through contact with the outside world as an empire, integration of the tribes into a single Mongol nation strengthened. Tribal and ethnic distinctions were maintained as Chinggis Khan organised them into the new administrative system of the Mongol

Empire; although the tribes retained their original boundaries, they were now all under the one Mongol flag.

Recognising possible power struggles among his sons, Chinggis Khan decided to give each his own sphere of power. These became the foundation of three khanates: the Golden Horde was situated in Russia and Eastern Europe, the Chagatai Khanate in Central Asia and the Il Khanate in the Middle East. As Chinggis Khan and his descendants continuously enlarged their domain, from Siberia to southern Asia and from Korea to Hungary, they subordinated many nations of different ethnicities, religions, histories and languages. Khubilai Khan (b.1216, r.1260–1294), grandson of Chinggis Khan, moved his capital to Daidu (now Beijing)⁸ in 1260, and established the Great Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368). Mongolian culture, technology and wealth were enriched by conquered peoples during this period, but these most benefited those living in China. The Mongols who were left on the Mongolian Plateau remained peripheral and had a poor and hard life.

In 1368, Zhu Yuanzhang (b. 1328, r.1368–1398) founded the Ming Dynasty. He occupied the Yuan capital Daidu and renamed it Beiping (北平, 'Peace of the North'). Yuan Emperor Togon-Temür (r. 1333–1370) fled to the northern homeland of Mongolia. The Mongol Emperors still preserved the Yuan seal and named their state in Mongolian Yuan. Scholars call this the Northern Yuan. The Northern Yuan rulers of Chinggisid⁹ held their title as Emperor of the Great Yuan until 1634, when the last Emperor Ligdan Khan died. The Northern Yuan never recovered its early glory of the 13th century. The rulers had left their economic base in China, and their homeland did not have enough strength to recover this lost power. In addition, there were constant power struggles within the golden lineage of Chinggis Khan, conflicts among the tribal groups, and war with the Chinese Ming Dynasty. Despite this turmoil, there was occasionally centralised power during the Northern Yuan period. For example, Dayan Khan (1481?–1517?) reunited Mongolia in the beginning of the 16th century. Some powerful confederations such as the Jüngars and Khalkha were formed, but they were not able to unite the whole Mongolia. In general, this period is called the 'dark age' of Mongolian history.

⁸ The Chinese name Daidu (大都) means 'Great Capital.' It is also called Dadu in modern pronunciation. The Mongolian name of Daidu is Khanbaliğ, meaning 'City of the Khan.'

⁹ Scholars use 'Chinggisid' to refer to Chinggis Khan's lineage.

The Mongols of today are descendants of the Mongols who remained in their homeland and those who fled China after the collapse of the Yuan in 1368. The Mongolian Khanate empires became increasingly autonomous as economic and political interests diverged, resulting in the ruling Mongols' assimilation into the local cultures and religions, notably their conversion to Islam in the Middle East and Central Asia. The division of the Mongols increased in the 17th century with the creation of the Deed (Upper) Mongols in Tibet, Kökenuur (Chi. Qinghai 青海), and Gansu, the Dagurs in Manchuria, the Buryats in Siberia, the Oirats in Xinjiang and the Khalmyks along the Volga River.

Towards the end of the 16th century and beginning of the 17th century, the Manchu people, a Tungusic ethnic group who originated from the Jurchin people who ruled China under the Jin Dynasty (1115–1234), rose to power against the Chinese Ming Dynasty. The Manchu strategy was to ally with the Mongols so as to have their military support to take over China. The Khorchin Mongols in the east were the first to ally with the Manchus, undermining the authority of Ligdan Khan.¹⁰ Another vital blow to Ligdan Khan was his opposition to the Gelukpa School of Tibetan Buddhism whose influence was increasingly dominant in both Mongolia and Tibet. A Manchu military expedition eventually ended the reign of Ligdan Khan who fled to Kökenuur and died of smallpox in 1634, and his sons surrendered to the Manchus in 1635. At that point, the sovereignty of Mongolia was lost to the Manchu. However, until 1691, the Northern Khalkha Mongols were still beyond the Manchu rule; by 1771, the western Oirat Mongols were still fighting against Manchu conquest. In the end, the Mongolian peoples fell under the rule of the Manchu-Qing Dynasty, except for the Buryats in Siberia and the Khalmyks in the southern Russian steppes, who came under Russian rule.

The Manchu court of the Chinese Qing Dynasty reorganised Mongolia into the banner (*khoshigu*) system, originally the form of Manchu military organisation. Banners

¹⁰ Eastern Inner Mongolia is sometimes simply called eastern Mongolia. This is confusing because historically, the vast area including Khalkha and Inner Mongolia was called eastern Mongolia, in contrast to the Mongolian area of Altai. Also, the whole of Inner Mongolia maybe referred to as eastern Mongolia, in contrast to the western regions of Qinghai and Xinjiang. In this thesis, eastern Inner Mongolia and eastern Mongolia refer to the region including Chifeng City (赤峰市, former Juu-Uda Aimag), Tongliao city (通辽市, former Jirim Aimag) and Kinggan Aimag in Inner Mongolia, Dörbed Autonomous counties in Heilongjiang (黑龙江) Province and South Gorlos Autonomous County in Jilin (吉林) Province, Fuxin (阜), Chaoyang (朝阳) and Zhangwu (彰武) Autonomous Counties in Liaoning (辽宁) Province.

were sub-divisions of a league (*chigulgan*), which was in turn supervised by an *amban*¹¹ or viceroy sent by the Manchu court. A banner was subdivided into arrows (*sumu*). This administrative system was an effective means of keeping tight control of the Mongols by preventing interaction between the banners. Manchu rulers also conferred a range of aristocratic titles on the people of the Golden Lineage of Chinggis Khan and his relatives, such as *wang* (prince), *güng* (prince of second degree, duke), *beile* (prince of third degree), *beise* (prince of fourth degree) and *taiji* (noble).¹² As these titles were inherited, the policy greatly satisfied the Mongol aristocrats and pacified the Mongols.

When the Manchu Qing Empire collapsed in 1911, the Khalkha Mongols, occupying Outer Mongolia were able to form an independent theocratic state under Jebtsundamba Khutughtu, the *Bogda Khan* (Holy Emperor). This independent Mongolia was called the People's Republic of Mongolia during its seventy-year socialist period, and changed to Mongolia in 1992 after becoming a democratic country in 1990. Within 9 million Mongol populations in the world, 2,300,000 are in Mongolia in 2000.

The rest of the Mongols under Manchu Qing rule remained in China. The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region founded in 1947 is the largest Mongolian inhabited region with 70% (4,029,200) of China's Mongol population of 5,810,000 according to the 2000 census (Department 2003). In addition, there are Mongolian autonomous *xian* (prefectures) and *xian* (counties) in the provinces of Gansu, Qinghai, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang and Hebei provinces as well as in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Hurelbaatar 1999: 200).

In the Russian Federation, there are 675,000 Mongol populations (2000), of which 450,000 (1989) Buryat Mongols live both to the East and to West of Lake Baikal in southern Siberia. They are distributed in the Buryat Republic, Irkutsk *Oblast*, Chita *Oblast*, as well as in Moscow and Moscow *Oblast* (Hurelbaatar 2002: 2). The Kalmyk Mongols in the Kalmykia (Kalmyk Republic of Russia) along the Caspian Sea are Europe's only Buddhist and Mongolian-speaking people. The population of Kalmykia in 2001 was estimated at 314,300 (Atwood 2004: 283).

¹¹ Manchu title used for the ethnically Manchu high officials sent to supervise Mongolian Banners.

¹² *Wang, güng, beile and beise* were titles for the nobles who had hereditary ruling position, so they had to be *taiji*. The *taiji* who had no ruling position also were divided into four ranks.

2. The first diffusion of Buddhism

Mongolian religion before Buddhist conversion

The traditional religion in pre-Buddhist Mongolia was believed to be shamanism, which often includes all the religious ideas and practices found in the historical sources and travelogues circa the 13th century.

In *The Secret History of the Mongols* (*Secret History* hereafter), a 13th-century chronicle of Chinggis Khan's life and lineage, one finds the word 孛额 (bö'e), in Chinese 师公 (shi gong), meaning wizard (De Rachewiltz 2004: 652–654; 870; 994). Bö'e is used after the name of Toǵtuǵa, who also bears a title beki (ibid: 40–41). As its plural form bö'es has the same Chinese translation and clearly denotes religious professionals who performs divination. De Rachewiltz just translates this as “shamans” without giving the original Mongolian bö'es. The modern Mongolian spelling is böge but still pronounced bö'e or böö. Beki appears many times being attached to numerous people's names who are chiefs of clans or tribes. So, in Toǵtuǵa's case, he plays a double role, i.e. chief and religious professional. It is quite possible that the 13th century was the time when the position of religious professionals bö'e began to separate from that of the chief beki. The reason why the term beki has faded into obscurity while bö'e is still in use today is probably due to the former being dropped from common use following the disintegration of tribal organisation after Chinggis Khan's re-structuring of the tribes in his empire into Tens, Hundreds, Thousands and Ten-thousands. The rulers of these new organisations were not named beki but noyan (noble).

Kökechü, who bears the title Teb Tengri and translated alternately as Fully Heavenly by Heissig, The Very Divine by De Rachewiltz and Lord Cunning by Cleaves (Elizabeth Endicott-West 1999: 225), was considered to be a shaman although he does not bear bö'e or beki title. Teb Tengri had the ability to transmit the will of the heaven and became arrogant enough to compare himself to Chinggis Khan. Eventually, he was put to death under Chinggis Khan's order because of the growth of his power, the tension he had instigated between Chinggis Khan and his brother Khasar and abusing his uncle Otchikin (De Rachewiltz 2004: 168–172). This means that Chinggis Khan also undermined the power and influence of shamans to prevent their integration into the new political order. Maybe that is why Chinggis Khan gave the title beki but not bö'e to Üsün Ebügen (Old Man Üsün) when he appointed him as a 'chief priest' (De Rachewiltz

2004: 148). However, the beki did not replace the bö'e, who continued to play their role throughout Mongolian history.

Christopher Atwood summarises the shaman's functions as follows:

Some made astrological observations and could predict eclipse, scapulimancy and astrology.... presided over the regular calendrical ceremonies....supervised the purification by fire of gifts intended for the great lords and of anything that had been in the presence of the dead... During war, others performed weather magic with jada stone [magic stone], brought snowstorms, and extreme cold. Only some shamans performed the meat offering and drummed the famous shamanic séances that are now essential for any shaman.... According to observers such as William of Rubruck, the shamans were always ready to account for untoward events by levelling accusations of witchcraft, particularly against women... The involvement of shamans in the death of Tolui, Chinggis Khan's youngest son, has also been seen as a case of politically motivated murder (Atwood 2004:494–495).

However, following Chinggis Khan and his successors' interest in the ability of different religious professionals to 'pray to heaven and give blessings,' the role of traditional Mongolian religious professionals became insignificant; they became only one of many options for the ruler. Shamans performed rituals alongside Christian priests and Buddhist monks under the great khans of Mongol Empire and the Yuan Dynasty (ibid.).

Concerning this 'praying to heaven,' it should be noted that the central element of all religious practices of the Mongols in the pre-Buddhist era was the worship of Köke Mönke Tengri (the Eternal Blue Heaven or Sky). The idea of tengri prevails in the Secret History, which begins, 'Chinggis Khan's ancestor was the heavenly destined Blue-grey wolf' (De Rachewiltz 2004:1). According to the Secret History, Chinggis Khan considered himself destined by Mighty Heaven; Heaven and earth gave him the strength to conquer distant realms (De Rachewiltz 2004: 52).

The constant use of the Mongolian expression Mönke tengri-yin kücündür, 'through the power of Eternal Heaven,' in epistles, ordinances, order tablets (p'ai-tzu) and stone inscriptions of the Mongol dynasty (thirteenth to fourteenth centuries) bears witness to the belief of the Mongols in the presence of a heavenly power to which all powers of and above the earth are subject (Heissig 1980: 47).

In fact any religious professionals, whether Christian, Muslim, Taoist or Buddhist, were useful and prized as long as they could 'pray to heaven'. All these religions were brought to the Mongol court for the khan to explore more powerful and

effective means of serving his political needs. In this sense, some scholars' suggested term 'tengrism', 'tenggerism' 'tengriism' or 'tengrianizm' might be more appropriate than 'shamanism' as a label for Mongolian traditional religion (Bezertinov 2000: 71–95; Bira 2003; Laruelle 2007).

According to the records of mediaeval travellers, the earth (etügen) was also worshipped by the Mongols (Heissig 1980: 101–102). In the Secret History, Chinggis Khan is said to have believed that heaven and earth had bestowed upon him the strength to make him khan (De Rachewiltz 2004: 152). Some other religious practices, such as belief in *sülde* (tutelary deities)—the worship of ancestors, mountains, the spirits of herds and so on—are also reported in the historical sources of that time. However, the Mighty Heaven was the highest spiritual presence and dominated everything beneath it.

The Mongol rulers' interest in new religions and attempt to finding their favourite one will be seen in the next section.

It is not possible to pinpoint the exact beginnings of Buddhist belief and practices among the Mongols. Mongol scholars, including monks, say that during the Han Dynasty, the Chinese obtained a golden statue of the Buddha from the Huns in battle (Ishibaljur 1993: 738f, 662–663). Larry Moses traces the first contact of the Mongolians with Buddhism back to the 4th century A.D. By that time, the T'o-pa Wei dynasty would have some influence on the Juan-juan dynasty which dominated Mongolia at that time (Moses 1977: 23–4).

Archaeological evidence suggests that Buddhism was introduced to Mongolian plateau during the Turkic (552–630 CE), Uyghur (630–840 CE), and Kitan (916–1125 CE) empires. The palace built by Ögedei Khan (1229–1241), the son of Chinggis Khan, in the capital Kharakhorum, was on the foundations of a former Buddhist temple; some of the murals from this temple have been preserved (Heissig 2003). The White Stūpa on the south bank of Kerülün River and another in Baġarin Right Banner, Eastern Inner Mongolia were built by the Kitans (Bulaġ 2003: 156). However, we do not know which specific Mongol tribes had contact with Buddhism. It is known, though, that Chinggis Khan interacted with lamas of Tshal pa Kagyüpa (bka' brgyud pa) and Sakyapa (Sa skya pa) schools of Tibetan Buddhism in the Tangut Empire. According to *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston* (*Religious History: The Feast of the Wise*) by the Second Pawo Rinpoche Tsuglag Threngwa (Dpa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba 1504–1566), seven people headed by lama Gtsang pa dung khur ba of Tshal pa Kagyüpa, went to Mongolia and

meditated on a mountain. Later they were captured by the Mongol army and sent to see Chinggis Khan because of their magical power. They explained Buddhist doctrine to Chinggis Khan through an interpreter and seeded in him some faith. Even so, because of the jealousy of Taoists and Christians, they could not stay and went back to Tangut. Later, when Chinggis Khan was fighting the Tangut and the Mongol army was plundering monasteries, Gtsang pa dung khur ba went to Chinggis Khan and begged him to stop. Chinggis Khan conferred upon him the title *teb tengri* (means Wholly Heavenly). Chinggis Khan's youngest son Tolui's wife, Sain Ekhe (Good Mother), and her sons became Gtsang pa dung khur ba's patrons. He explained the law of cause and effect through an interpreter to Chinggis Khan and advised him to believe in Buddhism. Chinggis Khan gave an order to exempt monks from taxes and services to the state, and prohibited the army from staying in monasteries and repaired monasteries and temples (Choiiji, 1998:123).

Chinggis Khan had contact not only with Tibetan Buddhism, but also with Chinese Buddhism¹³. However, these encounters did not have any particular impact on his government because Chinggis Khan had a policy of equality among all religions. He believed that his destiny was to gather all the people on earth and under the sky beneath the reins of his horse. Mongols venerated the power of Eternal Blue Heaven (*Möngke köke tengri*). Chinggis Khan believed that Heaven and earth had bestowed upon him the strength to make him khan (De Rachewiltz 2004: 152). Therefore, any religious specialists who had the ability to pray to Heaven and were willing to support him were tolerated and rewarded. His meeting with Chinese Taoist master Chang Chun Zhen Ren (长春真人) illustrates this. Chinggis Khan summoned the master of the Quan Zhen Dao (全真道) School when he was campaigning in the Middle East in 1222. This time he enquired about how to take care of the physical body and to govern the state and people. He listened to the cosmology of Quan Zhen Dao and gave Chang Chun Zhen

¹³ The first recorded contact Mongols had with Chinese Buddhism was in 1214, when Hai Yun Chan Shi (海运禅师 1202–1257), a highly learned Chinese monk of the Chan Zong (禅宗) School came with his teacher to see Chinggis Khan. When Chinggis Khan asked the master to tie up his hair, the master replied that he would lose his religious appearance if he were to follow the rule of the state. He was allowed to keep his hair loose. Later, in 1215, Chinggis Khan gave an order in reply to the recommendation of his chief official Mokhulai regarding Hai Yun Chan Shi and his master Zhong Guan (中观). Chinggis Khan confirmed that the old and young *jang lao* (长老 Buddhist master) were surely the ones who wanted to 'pray to the heaven and give blessings,' and made them the heads of Chinese Buddhism, conferring upon them the title *Darkhan* (people who were exempt from any taxes and services). Hai Yun Chan Shi and Chinese Buddhism were venerated and protected by the Mongol khans and the Yuan emperors (Choiiji 1998: 126–129).

Ren the power to take charge of 'all the good people under Heaven who renounced family life' (Wang 1983). At this point, Buddhism clearly did not satisfy his personal needs or meet his political aims. A religion needs time to establish itself in a new culture and society, as the historical development of Buddhism among the Mongols, Chinese and Tibetans indicates. Buddhism was a completely new ideological system for the Mongols and was not, therefore, immediately accepted or acceptable.

Significant Buddhist influence on the Mongol Empire began only after Chinggis Khan's death. Because of the privilege given by Chinggis Khan to the master Gtsang pa dung khur pa of the Tshal pa Kagyüpa, and his doctrinal brother (*nom-un akh-a*) Kung thang pa were venerated by Khubilai's mother and her sons soon after Ögedei Khan was enthroned as Chinggis Khan's successor. Kung thang pa had prophesied that Khubilai would be a person of virtue, and that he would become an emperor (Choiiji 1998: 123). A Kashmiri Buddhist master whom the Mongols called Otochi (Physician) and his brother Namog came to the court of Ögedei Khan (1229–1241). Güyük Khan (1246–1249) employed Otochi as a court physician, while Möngke Khan (1251–1259) made Namog chief of all Buddhist monks (Atwood 2004: 293).

In 1240 Köten, Ögedei's second son, who ruled the Tangut territory dispatched an expedition to Central Tibet to renew the Tangut link with the monasteries there. In 1247, the hierarch of the Sakyapa and head of the aristocratic 'Khon family, Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251), known as Sakya Pandita (Scholar of the Sakya), met Köten. According to Atwood, the prince was sick and Sakya Pandita cured him, as gaining Köten's favour (Atwood 2004: 293). This is the first known direct contact that the Mongols had with Tibetan Buddhism.

When Möngke Khan ascended the throne in 1251, he further strengthened the relationship between Tibetan Buddhism and the Mongol imperial family by placing each of his brothers in charge of a major Tibetan Buddhist school, as its patron, except Sakyapa School. Möngke was patron of 'Drigungpa ('Bri gung pa); Khubilai of Tshalpa; Ülegü of Phakmotrupa (Phag mo gru pa); and Arigbukha of Taklungpa (Stag lung pa). He also exempted all Tibetan Buddhist clergy from taxes and public service.

In 1253, Khubilai summoned Sakya Pandita's nephew Phakpa ('Phags pa, 1239?–1280) to his camp on his way to attack the Dali state in Yunnan. Khubilai, together with twenty-four others, received Tantric Hevajra initiation in the same year. In 1256, the Tibetan Karma Bakshi (1206–1283), famed for his magical power, also received

Möngke's patronage. Despite all these, Chinese Taoism and Buddhism had more influence on the Mongol Empire because of Chinggis Khan favoured them. This led to a long period of struggle between Chinese Daoism and Buddhism which was eventually resolved through the so-called 'Three Debates' held by the Mongol Khans.

The first debate took place in the palace of Kharakhorum in 1255 under Möngke Khan's supervision. The second debate was won by the Buddhist, with the Taoists' withdrawal. The third was held by Khubilai, the brother of the Khan at that time in the newly built palace in Kaiping (开平), later Shangdu (上都) City in 1257. This was the decisive debate in which over 700 people participated. On the Buddhist side, more than 300 people came, including the high monks of Chinese Buddhism headed by the Shaolin Janglao Fuyü (少林长老福裕), the master Namo from Kashmir, the Phakpa Lama from the Sakyapa School of Tibetan Buddhism and other monks from Tangut. On the Daoist side were over 200 participants. Apart from that, there were over 200 witnesses, consisting of Confucians and government officials. In this debate, the Phakpa Lama played a crucial role and the Buddhist side won over the Taoists (Choiiji 1998: 194–199).

The Mongol Empire's process of resolving Buddhist and Daoist conflict in debate revealed their policy of religious tolerance, but also became a means of choosing their favourite religion. This combat became an event of historical significance in the religious history of the Mongol Empire and the successive Yuan Dynasty in two main ways. First, the policy of religious equality started by Chinggis Khan and implemented throughout the Mongol Empire changed. Prior to the three debates, Buddhists (Tuid), Taoists (Xiansheng 先生), Christians (Erkeküd) and Muslims (Tašmad) held the same position at court; afterwards, Buddhists became pre-eminent. Secondly, from the various Tibetan Buddhist schools, the Phakpa Lama of Sakyapa suddenly stood out and played a crucial role in winning the debate. His appearance in this debate was due to Khubilai, whom the lama had accompanied there. The victory of the Phakpa Lama laid an important foundation for his special favour in the Mongol Empire and, more importantly, in the coming Great Yuan Dynasty.

Khubilai's favour of Tibetan Buddhism, specifically the Sakyapa School, began when Phakpa convinced him that Buddhism was helpful in ruling the world and managing the state. As a result, the Mongol ruling class and Tibetan Buddhism formed the popularly known 'priest and patron' (*blam-an öglige-yin ejen-ü barildulg-a*) relationship (Choiiji 1998: 208). According to *Sakya gdung rabs*, there were initial

difficulties in the meeting of Khubilai and the Phakpa Lama. The latter refused an official appointment to recruit an army and collect taxes in Tibet, and was about to return home with disappointment. However, Khubilai's wife Chabui saved the situation. She advised Khubilai to ask the Phakpa Lama about doctrine. In the discussion, Khubilai found the Phakpa Lama to be very arrogant and asked the reason for it. The Phakpa Lama related how his predecessors had been lamas of the emperors of China, Tangut, India and Tibet, and mentioned how the emperor of Tangut venerated his Sakyapa School. Khubilai was impressed when he confirmed that what the Phakpa Lama had said was true (Choi 1998: 211). Thus, the Phakpa Lama convinced Khubilai that Buddhism was not contradictory but helpful to the khan and turned a new page on Tibetan and Mongolian history and religion.

Khubilai took the Hevajara Tantra initiation from the Phakpa Lama.¹⁴ He received the second 'Three Tantras' initiation together with his wife and sons from the Phakpa Lama in 1255. After Khubilai became Khan of the Mongol Empire, he conferred upon the Phakpa Lama the title of State Preceptor (Mon. *Ulus-un baḡshi*, Chi. *Guoshi* 国师) in 1260. Khubilai created the office of 'Supreme Control Commission' (Mon. *Yerüŋkeilen jasakhu küriyeleng*, Chi. *Zongzhiyuan* 总治院) under the State Preceptor to administer both Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist affairs in 1264. Khubilai Khan received his third initiation from the Phakpa Lama in 1270. After Phakpa created the Square Script as a state script for Mongolian based on Tibetan alphabet, Khubilai promoted him to Imperial Preceptor (Mon. *Khaḡan-u baḡshi*, Chi. *Dishi* 帝师) in the same year. Until 1368, when the Yuan fell to the Ming, the title and position of Imperial Preceptor was preserved and conferred upon as many as sixteen Tibetan high lamas.¹⁵

This relationship between ruler and lama is especially important to Tibetan Buddhism and Mongolian politics. It is because of this relationship that Mongolian Buddhism was not established in any significant way at this point in history. Tibetan

¹⁴ Khubilai's wife, Chabui suggested that Khubilai take initiation from Phakpa Lama. However, Khubilai refused when he heard that he had to observe certain vows, for instance, that the lama would be superior, that he would have to make prostrations to the lama, obey the lama in speech and not be contradictory to the lama in mind'. However, the problem was solved again by his wife Chabui. She suggested that the Lama should sit higher when the Khan listened to the doctrine and when there were less people. However, in order to rule over people, the Khan had to sit higher than the Lama did when his relatives, children, nobles, officials and many people gathered. For Tibetan affairs, it was agreed that the Lama's wishes would be followed and he would be kept informed. However, for major and minor state affairs, it was not necessary for the Lama to be involved, otherwise it would be difficult.

¹⁵ The number and names of the *dishi* and the year in which the title was conferred vary in different publications e.g. 16 are listed in Delige (1998: 37) and 15 in Bulag (2003: 183–185).

Buddhism did not become nationalised and was not transplanted effectively into Mongolia. Buddhism had some influence among the Mongolian ruling class, but it failed to profoundly affect the masses. Because of Yuan patronage, Tibetan Buddhism flourished during the Great Yuan period. Cataloguing of Tibetan canonical works and compilation of *Kanjur* (Bka' 'gyur) was initiated by 'Jam dbyangs Bakshi, the Tibetan preceptor of Emperor Ayurbarwada (titled Buyantu, r. 1311–1320), and supplied through shipments of materials such as ink and paper. Subsequently all the 'word of the Buddha' was edited into the *Kanjur* and the commentaries of Indian Buddhist writers like Nāgārjuna, Śāntideva, and Aśvaghoṣa, were organised into the *Tanjur* (bsTan-'gyur) (Bulaḡ 2003: 649–650; Harrison 1992: 75).

Chinese records from this time are almost all about Chinese Buddhism, and those in Tibetan are about Buddhism in Tibet or relevant events in the Sakyapa lamas' relationship to Mongol rulers. There is no record of temples or monasteries with Mongol monks in Mongolian or other languages. We do not know if any Mongols renounced the world and became monks, forming a Mongolian *sangha* (Buddhist community). In the Mongols' practices of Buddhism, emperors took Buddhist initiation when they were enthroned. Usually the emperors' wives, children, relatives, and other nobles also took initiation. However, there is no record of any Mongol becoming a monk. It seems that the most important religious activities for the Mongols were the sponsorship of monks to chant religious texts and perform various rituals throughout the year. The main function of Buddhism was still no more than praying to the heaven and giving blessings.

The fundamental reason for the Mongols' veneration of Mahayana Buddhism, especially the Sakyapa School, was its miraculous, Tantric power. If it had been for political reasons, Khubilai could have chosen other influential monks when Phakpa refused his offer of appointment. It seems feasible that Khubilai's change of attitude towards Phakpa, on the advice of his wife, was because of Phakpa's miraculous power and mastery of Hevajra Tantra. A very accomplished Karmapa master known as Karma Bakshi (1204–1283) came to Mongolia at the invitation of then-prince Khubilai in around 1250s. He won the favour of Möngke Khan by displaying miracles. He was captured by Khubilai Khan and suffered all kinds of torture because he remained in Mongolia with Arigböge who was opposed Khubilai for seizing the throne after Möngke Khan's death. He was released in 1264, and went back to Tibet (Choiḡi 1998: 178–182). Although Khubilai imprisoned Karma Bakshi for political reasons, he released him

because of his miraculous power. The Mongol imperial family and nobles took initiation to access tantric power. It is not clear how sincerely they practised for enlightenment. However, through Tantric initiation, the ruling class transformed themselves into a divine class, or at least a special caste bestowing tantric powers upon them. This also explains the connection of Mongol khans to the historical succession of Buddhist monarchs outlined by Phakpa in his work *Shes bya rab gsal* (Mon. *Medegdekiin-i belgetey-e geyigülügchi śastir*, Elucidation of knowledge, 1278), the Buddhist doctrine dedicated to Khubilai's son and heir-apparent, Jingim. It also explains the motivation behind the recognition of Khubilai and his successors as long-prophesied Buddhist monarchs.

The Mongols certainly had some understanding of Buddhism which they used to their political advantage, as two edicts to Tibet by Khubilai reveal. The first edict is 'travel document with pearl' (Tib. '*Ja sa mo tig ma*, Mon. *Sobud erdenitü modigm-a kemekü jigukhu tamağ-a bichig*), issued by Khubilai to indicate the Phakpa Lama's position and privileges, and also the privileges given to Buddhist monks in 1264. In it, he writes, 'If you monks do not teach, listen and meditate, then what is called Buddhism? The Buddha said, "My religion is like the lion, the king of the beasts. There is nobody who can destroy it from the outside, if there is no harm from the inside"' (Choiiji 1992: 43–44). The second edict is called '*travel document in Tibet*' (Tib. '*Ja sa bod tig ma*, or *Ban de shed bskyed ma*, Mon. *Tübed-iyer jigukhu tamağ-a biching*) and was issued in 1276. Here, Khubilai reveals his understanding of Buddhism by ordering the monks not to pursue worldly affairs, but to study and practise Buddhism well. 'The ones, who know Śākyamuni's religion, teach it; the ones who do not know it, learn it. Be engaged in writing, chanting, contemplating and meditating the canon; [...] some say, "it is unnecessary to learn, only meditate." What is to be meditated on without learning? Isn't it to meditate after learning?' (Choiiji 1992: 51–53). Prince Jingim, Khubilai's son and successor, asked the Phakpa Lama to write a detailed outline of the Buddhist doctrine. The latter wrote the *Explanation of the Knowledge* in 1278. In the Yuan period, some Tibetan Buddhist works were translated into Mongolian, including *sūtras*, devotional works, the biography of the Buddha, and guides to lay Buddhist life (see Chapter 2).

A sign of the flourishing of Buddhism during the Yuan was the number of temples and monasteries built. There were over 40,000 monasteries and temples and

200,000 monks throughout the empire (Delige 1998: 61). Many of these institutions were probably Chinese Buddhist. Chinese Buddhism was still venerated and supported, even though Tibetan Buddhism held the position of religion of the royal court. The honour and privileges of the Taoists, obtained from Chinggis Khan, were also kept, and the general policy of religious equality implemented.

Special monasteries were built by the Mongols for imperial services. For example, Khubilai had the White Pagoda Temple (Mon. Chagan soburgatu süm-e, Chi. Baitasi 白塔寺) built in Daidu by the Nepalese architect Anige (1244–1306), who was taken there by the Phakpa Lama. The White Pagoda Temple became a centre for Buddhist translations from Tibetan into both Mongolian and Uyghur (also spelled Uighur). In the Mongolian heartland, numerous monasteries were built by different schools of Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism or high monks in Kharakhorum and Shangdu. However, there is no record of any named Mongol monks or mention of the ordination of a Mongol monk. Translators, such as Sonom-Gara, Shirebsengge (Shes rab seng ge) and Chojiiodsar (Chos kyi od zer), were not clearly known to be Mongols, but are believed to have been Uyghurs (Atwood 2004: 106; Choiji 2003: 318).

It might be that the faith of the Mongol khans, princes, queens, princesses and nobles had not reached the extent that they could renounce the glory, position and wealth they held during the Mongols' most powerful moment. As has been pointed out above, ordinary Mongols did not have the chance to fully accept Buddhism. Buddhism in the Mongol empire and at the Yuan court only impacted the Mongolian ruling class. Buddhism already met the needs of the Tibetan clergy and the Mongolian state and that was enough. Tibetan Buddhists had earned the ruling class's protection and patronage. Mongol rulers used religion to pacify peoples, and so sought the most powerful religion to support their empire. The most intellectually accomplished 'teachers' gave advice to the khan about how to stabilise their rule. Neither the clergy nor the ruling class had any interest in or need to convert ordinary people to Buddhism.

In the case of the first conversion to Tibetan Buddhism of the Mongols, there are no grounds to assume that Mongolian Buddhism was established in any permanent way. It is commonly agreed that after the collapse of Mongol rule in China (1368) and the isolation of Mongolian lands, Buddhism faded away along with other foreign religions, giving way to the revival of indigenous practices of shamanism. Tibetan Buddhism lost ground, as it had been built on state patronage instead of the faith of the Mongol people.

The 'dark-age' after the collapse of Mongol rule in China was not only 'dark' in a political and economic sense, but also in a cultural and religious sense. However, the conflation of Tibetan Buddhists and Mongol Yuan rulers subtly infiltrated the Mongols' cultural heritage, and consequently sowed the seeds for a revival.

3. National conversion to Buddhism

There is evidence to suggest that Buddhism had not completely disappeared in the 200 years after the collapse of the Yuan Dynasty. In 1431, a new edition of a collection of *dhāraṇīs* in Sanskrit, Chinese, Tibetan and Mongolian was printed, the second volume of which comprised *sūtras* in Chinese with an introduction in Mongolian (Serruys 1962: 187). The Mongol nobles in particular had not forgotten Buddhism and some were even devoted Buddhists. Serruys suggests that Khutuḡtai Sechen Khung-Taiji, the noble who advised Altan Khan to invite the Third Dalai Lama to Mongolia, was a devout Buddhist (*ibid*). Evidence for this is found in the letter which Khutuḡtai wrote to the Chinese Ming court on behalf of Altan Khan, which is full of Buddhist expressions. In the late Yuan period, traces could be seen of Tibetan monks' activities in Mongolia. It is also possible that monks from China and Tibet went to Mongolia, and there is evidence to suggest that monks also went from Mongolia to China. An Oirat Mongol noble, for instance, sent Tibetan monks as envoys to the Chinese Ming court to request Buddhist ceremonial objects and a robe for his own Tibetan lama. Anti-Buddhist and anti-Lamaist persecutions by the Ming emperors Yingzong and Shizong also forced Tibetan monks to seek refuge among the Mongols (Heissig 1980: 26). However, these were merely traces and they were still related to the ruling class's occasional contacts, and had no large scale impact on the Mongolian society or nation.

When Mongol rulers reintroduced Buddhism, specifically the Gelukpa (Dge lugs pa) School of Tibetan Buddhism, into Mongolia as a revival of Khubilai Khan and Phakpa Lama's 'patron-priest' relationship, the whole nation converted. The 'National Conversion' refers to the Buddhist missionary movement of 1576 to the 18th century, through which Mongols all over Inner Asia adopted Buddhism as their official religion.

Between the 17th and the 20th centuries, Tibetan Buddhism was the dominant religion of the Mongols, and it influenced every aspect of Mongolian society and culture, including literature, social life, family structure, language, folk poetry and food. It changed everyone's life, even for those — such as shamans — who rejected Buddhism.

In the sections that follow, I present in more detail the way in which Buddhism was reintroduced into Mongolia and disseminated throughout the whole country. Once again, it was Mongol rulers who initiated the reintroduction of Buddhism.

Politically important individuals played a vital role in the revival. Individual monks, including Tibetan, and more importantly, Mongol monks, undertook the crucial task of disseminating Buddhism.

Altan Khan and the Third Dalai Lama

Altan Khan (1506–1582) was a 25th generation descendent of Chinggis Khan and a Tümed Mongol. He jointly ruled the western three Tümen (ten thousands)¹⁶ of Mongols with his brother Baiskhal. However, after his brother's death, Altan Khan's power grew swiftly and even exceeded the actual khan, Darayisung Küdeng Khan by the middle of the 16th century. After constant negotiation with the Chinese Ming court and military actions, he succeeded in opening markets at the border along the great wall between China and Mongolia. As a result, there was no war with the Chinese Ming dynasty for forty years and Chinese sanction of Mongolia ended. Altan Khan's power had grown and he had basically unified southern Mongolia. This not only promoted social, economic and political progress, but also provided opportunities for, including the construction of cities and settlements and the establishment of positive relations between Mongols, Tibetans and Chinese. More importantly, Altan Khan sparked by his meeting with the Third Dalai Lama reintroduced Buddhism into Mongolia.

In 1566, Altan Khan sent his nephew, Ordos noble Khutugtai Sechen Khung-Taiji, to conquer Tibet. The latter occupied northern Tibet and took several lamas back to Mongolia. These lamas had much influence on Khutugtai Sechen Khung-Taiji (Sağang-Sechen, 1980: 402–408). Altan Khan invited over twenty Tibetan monks of the Gelukpa School from Tibet and China to his court during the 1570s. He also had a gilded statue of Avalokiteśvara, with a thousand hands and faces, and the Tibetan translation of *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra* written in gold, brought to him by the monks (Bira 1999: 20). He gained some knowledge of Buddhism from the Ashing Lama, whose life is reported inconsistently in historical accounts, for example, 'He was called Ashing and went to Altan Khan from Amdo in 1571 (Jürüంగా, 1984: 86); 'From 1571, Altan Khan and

¹⁶ Administrative unit from organised system by tens (*arban*), thousands (*minggan*) and ten thousands (*tümen*), initiated by Chinggis Khan. When Altan Khan's grandfather, Dayan Khan, reunited Mongolia in the beginning of 16th century, he divided the Mongols into six 'ten thousands' and allocated them to his eleven sons. The six ten thousands were divided into three eastern and western 'ten thousands'. The three eastern 'ten thousands' were ruled by a khan (emperor) and the three western 'ten thousands' were under a *jinong* (prince). In principle, the khan should be above jinong.

Noyanchu Jüngen¹⁷ received Buddhist catechetical instruction from a Tibetan monk called Ashing Lama trained in Wutai' (Atwood 2004:10); 'This lama was also called the Arig Lama and was brought back with prisoners from Tibet by Altan Khan after the campaign against the 'black Tibetans' in 1573' (Sağang-Sechen, 1980: 402–408).

In 1576, Khutugtai Sechen Khung-Taiji visited Altan Khan and said, 'I heard that in the region of snow in the West, there is a perceptive, powerful, and compassionate Qongshim Bodhisattva in his person.'¹⁸ He continued: 'Wouldn't it be marvellous to invite him and establish religion and state in the same way as the holy Khubilai Sechen Khan and the Phakpa Lama?' Altan Khan immediately approved his suggestion, discussed it with the three western 'ten thousands,' and sent an envoy to invite the 'saintly all knowing Bsod nams rgya mtsho' to instruct him personally in the same year (Sağang-Sechen 1980: 423). In 1577, Altan Khan had a temple built in Chabchiyal, Kökenuur (Qinghai) in order to meet Bsod nams rgya mtsho. Bsod nams rgya mtsho set off from Drepung Monastery in November 1577 and reached Chabchiyal Temple in May 1578. Altan Khan was seventy one years old and in bad health. He held a grand welcoming ceremony and 'wore a white garment and rode a white horse to symbolise brightening up the dark continent of the border' (Sağang-Sechen, 1980: 439). About a hundred thousand Mongols, Tibetans, Chinese and Uyghurs attended the ceremony and around a thousand Mongols received initiation. On this occasion, Khutugtai Sechen Khung-Taiji gave a speech in which he recalled Köten and Sakya Pandita, Khubilai Khan and the Phakpa Lama, and compared Altan Khan and Bsod nams rgya mtsho to them. He complimented the virtue of the 'patron and priest' relationship and the 'two rules of religion and state.' He condemned the separation of religion and state which, he suggested, have dire results for both.

Altan Khan bestowed upon Bsod nams rgya mtsho the title Vajradhara Dalai Lama, and his two previous incarnations were recognised posthumously as the First and Second Dalai Lama. Bsod nams rgya mtso became the Third Dalai Lama. In return, he bestowed upon Altan Khan the title 'Cakravartin Wise Khan Who Turns the Golden Wheel with a Thousand Spokes (Buddhist universal monarch), and also conferred titles

¹⁷ One of Altan Khan's wives, who was known popularly as Sanniangzi (三娘子) in Chinese, managed the border trade with China after Altan Khan's death. Her coffin is preserved in a temple dedicated to her in Maidar Monastery near Hohhot.

¹⁸ *Qongshim* Bodhisattva refers to Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of compassion. Mongols also call him *Ariyabalu*. The statement 'Qongshim Bodhisattva in his person' implies that the Dalai Lama is considered to be the earthly manifestation of Avalokiteśvara,

on many nobles and officials according to their ranks (Saṅg-sechen, 1980: 441–444). Altan Khan selected three men from the lineage of the khan (ie. his own family line) and 180 intelligent men to become monks (Jürüంగా, 1984:121–122). This followed the early Tibetan example, in which seven people were made monks to test whether Tibetans were suitable to become monks (Nata, 1999: 131). This appears to be the first record of the ordination of Mongols.

On this occasion, Khutugtai Sechen Khung-Taiji declared the *Arban Buyantu Nom-un Chaḡaja* (*Law of Ten Virtuous Doctrines*) (Saṅg-sechen, 1980:450). The original text of the law has not been found, but its existence has been recorded in many Mongolian and Tibetan chronicles. The law included, the prohibition of *khoilug* (sacrifices of horses and camels) for the dead; the prohibition of insulting lamas and monks;¹⁹ orders to burn *ongḡud*²⁰ and prohibit sacrifice to them and to promote the worship of images of the Buddhist deity Mahākāla instead; use of dairy products instead of meat and blood for offerings; and orders that everyone should try to accumulate merits and fast on the eighth, fifteenth and the last day of each month (Nata, 1999: 122–124). The Third Dalai Lama left the Second Dūngkür Mañjuśrī Khutugtu²¹ with Altan Khan as his representative. In 1579, Altan Khan returned to the Tūmed, built Yeke Juu (Great Monastery) in Höhhot and constructed a twelve cubit (*tokhui*)²² high silver statue of Śākyamuni Buddha and other Buddha images.

In 1582, when Altan Khan was very ill and on the brink of death, the Tūmed Mongol nobles and officials grew suspicious about the power of Buddhism. They said, ‘What is the so-called goodness of this religion and doctrine? If it could not even help to save our khan’s golden life, what will be the use of it later? These lamas are actually talking falsely. Let us get rid of these monks.’ In response, Mañjuśrī Khutugtu called together all the nobles and officials and taught them the inevitability of death and asked

¹⁹ Although there is distinction between ‘lama’ and ‘monk’ in Mongolian, anyone who renounced the world was called ‘lama’ by ordinary people.

²⁰ *Ongḡud* refers to the images (usually in little human figure made of felt or bronze) of the spirits of Mongolian shamans, which are actually the spirits of dead shamans. The dead shamans in most cases are the existing shaman’s paternal or maternal ancestors but occasionally can be other shamans’ unrelated to him or her. In the former case, the shaman is called *udum-un böö* (lineage shaman) and in the latter case, *jelig böö* (wild shaman).

²¹ The second Dūngkür Khutugtu was called Yon don rgya mtsho. He was accompanying bSod nams rgya-mtsho on the occasion of Altan Khan and Dalai Lama’s meeting. The Mañjuśrī title was conferred upon him by the Third Dalai Lama on that occasion. He went to Mongolia with Altan Khan. Later he was invited to visit Khalkhas in Outer Mongolia (Li 1989: 105).

²² *Tokhui* is a unit of length, equal to the distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, approximately 33 cm.

an accomplished doctor, Yon tan rin chen, to blow medicine into Altan Khan's nose. Altan Khan, it is said, recovered. He then criticised his officials, asking which of his predecessors had lived eternally or up to a hundred years when there had been no Buddhism. He explained how the Buddha went into nirvāṇa in order to prove the inevitability of death and affirmed that Mañjuśrī Khutugtu's teachings were correct (Sagang-Sechen, 1987: 252–254). Altan Khan died the following year. Two years later, the Third Dalai Lama went to Mongolia for a three-month retreat. He reached Höhhot in 1586, where he held the funeral for Altan Khan and stayed in the newly-completed Shiregetü Juu Monastery (1585). He travelled eastward and died on the way to Beijing in 1588.

The Fourth Dalai Lama, Yon tan rgya mtsho, was born in 1589 as the son of Sumer Daiching Khung Taiji, the grandson of Altan Khan. He was recognised by local lamas and secular rulers as the reincarnation of the Third Dalai Lama. The three great Gelukpa monasteries of Ganden, Sera and Drepung in Tibet were very cautious and sent envoys to examine the child when he was four years old. His parents hesitated to let him be taken away to Lhasa at that time, so the child stayed in Shiregetü Juu Monastery in Höhhot. The first Shiditu Ġabju Shiregetü Güüshi Chorji²³ of the monastery was his teacher. When he was 10 years old, the three monasteries sent a delegation which officially recognised him as the Fourth Dalai Lama and took him to Lhasa in 1603. Later he was taken to Drepung monastery to receive Teachings. His main teachers were the Fourth Panchen Lama, Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, and the abbot of Ganden, Dge 'dun rgyal mtshan. The Fourth Dalai Lama became the thirteenth abbot of Drepung Monastery and fifteenth abbot of Sera Monastery. He contributed greatly to the dissemination of Buddhism in Mongolia. He passed away in Drepung Monastery in 1616 (Bulağ, 2003: 216–217).

Abadai Khan and Outer Mongolia

Abadai Khan of Khalkha Mongolia initiated the dissemination of Gelukpa School Buddhism in Outer Mongolia. Abadai Khan shared with Altan Khan the same ancestor, Dayan Khan. In 1581, he met a lama who had gone to Khalkha with merchants from Tümed and from him he had heard about Gelukpa Buddhism. He invited monks called

²³ He went to Mongolia after the Third Dalai Lama in 1585. After the Third Dalai Lama passed away, he stayed in the place of the Dalai Lama in Shiregetü Juu Monastery.

Sgomang Nangso and Samala Nangso from Tümed in 1581 and 1583 respectively (Bağana, 1984:126). Abadai Khan went to Höhhot to meet the Third Dalai Lama in 1586. The Dalai Lama, on his second visit to the city, conferred the title Vachir (Vajra) Khan on Abadai. Abadai Khan built Erdeni Juu, the first Gelukpa School monastery of Outer Mongolia, in the same year (Bulağ 2003: 220).²⁴ In this region were the remains of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries that had been built during the Mongol Empire. To make the Gelukpa School dominant in Outer Mongolia, the Fourth Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama sent the Lama Gungganingbu (Kun dga' snying po) to Outer Mongolia. The Fourth Dalai Lama gave him the title 'Yehe Eneringgüi Maidar Khutuğu (Great Compassionate Holy Maitreya).' He was highly venerated by the Mongols and given the title 'Yehe Eneriltü Nomuhan Bağshi (Great Compassionate Tranquil Teacher), *Sechen Jonong Khan* (Wise Princely Khan). He finished copying the Kanjur in gold in 1632 (Bulağ 2003: 220).

Oirat Mongols and Dzaya Pandita Namkhaijamsu (Nam mkha'i rgya mtsho)

Oirat (Oirat) Mongols, also known as Western Mongols, played an important role in Mongolian history. They joined the Mongol Empire along with other tribes in 1207. The Oirats became very powerful and even challenged the Golden Lineage of Chinggis Khan in the 15th century, which led to the long lasting feud between Western and Eastern Mongols. Although their constituent tribes varied in different historical periods, they formed a strong confederation which was generally known as the Four Oirats. "The Four-Oirat confederation has its origin in an anti-Yuan alliance formed by the old Oirats and three other powerful tribes of north-western Mongolia, the Naimans, the Kereids and the Barguds" (Okada 2008: 36). In the 17th century, 'the Oirat confederation consisted of the Dörbed, the Khoshud, the Dzungar, the Torghud, the Khoid, and so on (ibid.). In 1630, a chief called Khoo-Örlüg led the Torgud to the Volga; they became the Kalmyk Mongols of Russia. In 1636–37, Khoshud under Güüshi Khan occupied Kökenuur on the Tibetan Plateau at the invitation of the Fifth Dalai Lama. Through this religio-political alliance, the Gelukpa sect came to dominate Tibet.

²⁴ It has been popularly believed that Erdeni Juu was consecrated by a red sect lama (Bulağ 2003: 221; Atwood 2004: 169). However, Jin disputes the point together with the idea which considers that the Jebtsundamba Khutuğu was the reincarnation of Jonangpa Lama Tārānātha, and the whole notion of struggle between red and yellow sects (Jin 2006: pp 46–91).

After the Khoshud, the Zünġar Khanate emerged in what is now the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in the late 18th century (Atwood 2004: 419–423).

Although it is agreed that the major conversion of the Oirat Mongols to the Gelukpa School of Buddhism took place at the beginning of the 17th century, a few had accepted the religion in the late 16th century. After meeting with the Dalai Lama, Altan Khan sent an envoy to the Oirats to propagate the Gelukpa School of Buddhism. The Oirats' conversion to a 'new religion' led by a lama who came from Eastern Mongolia is noted in the record of Russian envoys to the Oirats (Bulaġ 2003: 232). A famous Oirat Monk Neichi Toyin renounced the world as early as 1580²⁵. Around 1610, at the request of Baibaġas Baatur Noyan (d. 1630), the head of the dominant Khoshud Oirat tribe, sent an envoy to request the Gelukpa dignitaries to send an accomplished lama to the Oirats. The Fourth Dalai Lama sent Chāġan Nom-un Khan (White King of the Dharma), the Third Dūngkūr (Tib. *dus 'khor*) Khutuġtu to them.²⁶ In 1615, at the suggestion of Baibaġas Baatur Noyan, all the Oirat lords agreed to send one son to Tibet to train to become monks. Baibaġas Baatur Noyan sent his adopted son Namkhajamtsu (Nam mkha'i rgya mtsho 1599–1662).

Since 1616, the Oirat Mongols had a close relationship with Tibet. Oirat Mongols went on pilgrimages to Lhasa and gave donations to the Dalai Lama. Numerous highly learned lamas emerged from the Oirats. Among them, the most outstanding was Dzaya Pandita Namkhajamtsu who did much to further the dissemination of Buddhism among his people. Namkhajamtsu arrived in Tibet in 1617. After taking his monastic vows under the Dalai Lama, he studied *tsanid* (Tib. *mtshan nyid*, academic study of Buddhist philosophy), his examination for the Rabjamba (*Rab 'byams ba*) degree was flawless. His biography relates that he also studied tantrism in tantric schools (*aġba rasang*, Tib. *sngags pa grwa tshang*; *jodba*, Tib. *rgyud pa grwa tshang*, Radnabhadra, 1990). In 1639, he returned to his homeland where he worked to further the spread of Buddhism. He wrote works on linguistics, Tibetan, Sanskrit, the religious canon, the history of religion, literary theory, and the methodology of translation from Tibetan into Mongolian. He built many monasteries and taught many

²⁵ Neichi Toyin will be talked about extensively later in this thesis.

²⁶ The Third Dūngkūr Khutuġtu was called Rgyal mtshan rgya mtsho. He was the reincarnation of the Second Dūngkūr Khutuġtu mentioned above, who was sent by the Third Dalai Lama to Mongolia with Altan Khan.

disciples. He also created Mongolian clear script (*tod üseg*)²⁷ in 1648–1649. In it, he invented special letters to transcribe Tibetan and Sanskrit sounds. He translated around 170 texts of Buddhist doctrines, biographies, literature, philosophy and logic, medicine, astronomy and linguistics. He attached his own poetry to many of his translations. He had a mobile temple. A mobile temple was a Mongolian style felt tent (*ger*) that was used as a temple, and that could be moved anywhere. Because of the Mongolian nomadic lifestyle, such mobile temples were used widely throughout Mongolia before building settled monastery complexes. Dzaya Pandita Namkhajamtsu travelled among the Oirats in Jungaria and Ijil Valley, among Volga Khalmyks and among the Khalkhas of Outer Mongolia. While travelling he taught Buddhist doctrine, and held services and initiations.

Eastern Inner Mongolia and Neichi Toyin

At the beginning of the 17th century, Buddhism was not popular among the Khorchins²⁸. It was an Oirat Mongol monk called Neichi Toyin (1557–1653) who played an important role in converting eastern Mongols to Buddhism. Here, I will briefly introduce his activities in converting eastern Mongols (see Chapter 3 for a full discussion). In contrast to the Tibetan missionaries, Neichi Toyin was a Mongol lama. His biography states that he made the fourth Panchen Lama his teacher and went to Mongolia at the Panchen Lama's suggestion around the end of the 16th century. After 35 years' meditation on a mountain north of Höhhot, Neichi Toyin gained many disciples. As Höhhot was dominated by lamas sent from Tibet, Neichi Toyin went with his disciples eastwards to the Khorchins and neighbouring areas. He cured diseases and infertility, converted shamans, and gained the respect of the nobility as well as ordinary people. He preached the doctrine, gave initiations and gained more and more disciples. He insisted on preaching in Mongolian and extensively taught Tantric formulas. In the process of teaching Neichi Toyin encouraged people to memorise Buddhist formulas by offering material rewards: 'More and more people memorise Yamāntaka and Guhyasamāja since

²⁷ It was called clear script because it was created by modifying the Uyghur-Mongolian script to resolve the ambiguities of the old, unreformed Uyghur-Mongolian script. Since then, the clear script has been used by the Oirat Mongols until the present time.

²⁸ The Khorchin Mongols are descendants of the semi-agricultural Mongols in Eastern Inner Mongolia ruled by the descendants of Chinggis Khan's younger brother Jochi-Qasar. There are also some other Mongol groups such as Gorus, Dörbed, and Jalaid, Bağarin, Ongnigud and Aukhan etc. in the eastern Inner Mongolia, and they are often generally referred to as the semi-pastoral and semi-agricultural eastern Mongols or as Khorchin since they are majority of the region.

a *lang* (Chi. *Liang* 兩, 37.3g) of gold was given to those who memorised Yamāntaka and Guhyasamāja Tantras, and property and animals were given to the poor as they wished' (*DCH*: 168). He initiated princes, dukes, nobles, officials, ladies, princesses and all the other believers, alms givers, lamas and monks into all kinds of vows such as *ubashi* (*upāsaka*), *ubasangja* (*upāsika*), *toyin* (*bhadanta*), *getsül*, *gelong* and the eight categories of monastic discipline (*aṣṭa pratimokṣasamvaragotra*, Mon. *angita tonilgagchi naiman sakil*) according to their ability and need. He and his disciples were highly venerated among the Mongols of Khorchin, Kharachin, Tümed, Naiman, Ongnigud, Keshigten, Aukhan, Baḡarin, Aru Khorchin, Dörbed, Jarud, Jalaid and Gorlos.²⁹ Because of him, chanting in Mongolian became popular among these people. Following Neichi Toyin's arrival, many monasteries and temples were built, and the number of disciples greatly increased in eastern Mongolia. Neichi Toyin made a lot of images of Buddhas, bodhisattavas and Tsongkhapa, and distributed them to the princes, nobles, lamas, monks and lay people. He also had the Mongolian Kangyur copied 108 times and distributed it among the people (*DCH*: 134–168).

Neichi Toyin's consistent opposition to shamanism was another means of converting people to Buddhism. Khorchin rulers collected *onggud* enough to make a pile of the size of a four-walled yurt³⁰ and burnt them. As shamanism held sway in the eastern Inner Mongolia at that time, people were afraid of offending shamans and their spirits. They believed that the shaman's personal spirit, which resided in small images, would harm people who were unfavourable to them. These spirits were essential to shamanism. Neichi Toyin's power over the shamans' spirits and burning of their images gave people confidence in him and relieved people's fear and worries about the future. His biography records how Neichi Toyin defeated the powerful Khobuḡtu Böge (Shaman Khobuḡtu *ibid*: 135–136), and restored the eyesight of a shamaness. Shamanic spirits were even feared by shamans themselves. However, Neichi Toyin's power surpassed that of the shamanic spirits and earned him the confidence of shamans (*ibid*: 140).

²⁹ These are different Mongol tribal names.

³⁰ The size of a Mongolian *ger* or yurt is measured by the number of wall sections (*khana*) it has. A *khana* is of roughly 1.5 to 1.8 m. high and 2 to 2.5 m. long.

Conversion of the Mongols in Russia

In the early 17th century, Tibetan Buddhism spread from Mongolia further north to Buryat Mongol communities of the Baikal region. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Transbaikial Buryat Mongols progressively converted to Buddhism. This was done mainly through the migration of the Mongols from Mongolia before the Kyakhta Treaty of 1727, which fixed the boundary of the Russian and Manchu Qing Empires (including Mongolia and Inner Mongolia). A Mongol Lama named Sanjaya set up a mobile temple on the banks of the river Kimni (also called Temnik) in 1701 (Snelling 1993: 4) and sedentary *datsans*³¹ were soon built among the people who migrated from Mongolia. In 1720, a group of 150 lamas arrived, about fifty of whom were renegade Tibetan lamas and the rest were Mongols. A second wave came directly from Tibet, aiming at weakening the influence of Mongols and Manchus in the region. Thus, the Buryat tradition became officially independent of the Mongolian Buddhist organisations. In 1728, the authorities prohibited the further entrance of Mongolian lamas to the Buryat territory, and authorised the ordination of only two tax-exempt lamas from per clan. In 1741, a decree by Empress Elizabeth authorised the creation of eleven *datsans* in Transbaikalia with 150 lamas each. In 1764, this official Buddhist structure was completed with the selection of the Shireetü Lama (Chair Lama) Damba-Darzha Dzayaev (c.1710–11–1777)³² of Tsongol Monastery as the Pandita Khambo Lama (Learned Abbot Guru) with authority over all Buddhists in Buryatia.³³ Buddhism soon spread to the Khorî Buryats in the east of Baikal, where monastery construction began in 1758. Monasteries began to be built on the Aga Steppe in 1801, among the Alair and Tünken Khongoodors in 1814–1817, and in Barguzin in 1818. Book publication also developed rapidly. In 1887, there were already twenty-nine publishing houses, which had produced about 2,000 titles in Tibetan and Mongolian. By 1916, the official monk population of Buryatia had risen to around 16,000 and there were thirty- seven *datsans*, many more than the limit of eleven set by the Russian authorities, which accommodated

³¹ Buryats call their monasteries *datsan*, which is a variant of the Tibetan *grwa tshang*.

³² Damba-Darzha Dzayaev was a son of Dzaya Sakhulakov, a nobleman of the Tsongol clan. In 1724, he left home and went to Mongolia and then further to Lhasa and remained there for seven years, studying at Gomang (Sgo mang) and Ratö monasteries. He received his *getsül* ordination from the Second Panchen Lama, and his *gelong* (full monk) ordination from the Seventh Dalai Lama (Snelling 1993: 4).

³³ Khambo is a Mongolisation of the Tibetan Mkhän po, meaning a Buddhist abbot or one who has attained high scholastic honours (Ibid: 6).

one Pandita Khambo Lama, 216 monks and thirty four *bandi* or novices (Snelling 1993: 7).

In the 18th century, Tibetan Buddhism from Mongolia reached the Turkic population of Tuva, though the first wave of Buddhism had come there from Uyghurs in the 9th century. As in the Baikal region, the Gelukpa tradition was mainly practised, although the Nyingma-pa tradition was also widespread. The priors of Chadán Khura were given the title of Khambo Lama as leaders of Tuvan Buddhism. Since Tuva, like Mongolia, was under Manchu authority until 1912, the Khambo Lamas of Tuva were subordinate directly to the Bogda Gegen in Urga. Buddhism in Tuva had significantly closer relations to Buddhism in Mongolia than Buryat Buddhism. Many temples (*küree*) in Tuva included schools so that boys could acquire basic religious literacy. Tuvans usually obtained higher theological education in Mongolia. Here, unlike in eastern Inner Mongolia, Buddhism coexisted peacefully with the local tradition of shamanism. People went to shamans for certain issues while consulting Buddhist priests for others (Pavlov 2004).

In the early 17th century, the ancestors of the Khalmyk Mongols separated from the Oirats of Jungaria and migrated to the region between the Volga and the Don rivers, north of the Caspian Sea. They took their own tradition of Tibetan Buddhism with them. The leader of Khalmyk Buddhism was appointed by the Russian tsar and was titled Lama of the Khalmyk People. Residing in Astrakhan, he had complete independence from both the Mongols and the Pandita Khambo Lama of the Buryats. Khalmyks received spiritual guidance directly from Tibet, and owing to their natural syncretism, they adopted rites of the Sakyapa and Kagyüpa traditions as well as Gelukpa, which was the most widely practised. In order to promote the development of Russia's international bonds in the East and particularly to establish direct ties between the tsarist government and theocratic regimes of Mongolia and Tibet, a Buddhist temple was built in St. Petersburg, the capital of the Russian Empire. The works were funded by the Dalai Lama and donations were raised in Buryatia and Khalmykia. Jebtsundamba Khutugtu, the head of Mongolian Buddhists, also contributed a significant sum. An eminent Buryat lama Agvan Dorjiev was in charge of the temple's establishment and activities (Pavlov 2004).

To sum up, the reintroduction of Buddhism to Mongolia was a rapid, effective process. Even though the Mongolian rulers initiated it, as they had in the first wave of

Buddhism during the Mongol Empire, it reached the common people and quickly became popular. There were five main reasons for this. First, from the start it was not only nobles but also a larger number of ordinary Mongols who took ordination to become monks. Secondly, because of the situation in Mongolia at that time, Buddhism was not monopolised by the imperial court to serve for state affairs only, but was accepted by relatively independent parts of Mongolia in different ways. Thirdly, Tibetan high monks headed by the Dalai Lamas were not only interested in the patronage of the Mongols, but were also interested in converting the Mongols to their Buddhism. Fourthly, some of the first ordained Mongol monks played an important role in converting the Mongols. Finally, recognition of the Dalai Lama's rebirth in Mongolia inevitably promoted the growth of faith in the Mongols. However, the Mongolian national submission to Manchu Qing rule left Buddhism no option for natural adjustment to the needs of Mongols as it was put under external control. This external control determined to a great extent the formation and outlook of Mongolian Buddhism.

CHAPTER 2. Formation of Mongolian Buddhism

This chapter investigates how Mongolian Buddhism was shaped within the Mongolian socio-political and religious conditions and developed through intellectual efforts. This is looked at in the three major areas of spirituality, politics and literature.

1. Tibetan spiritual dominance

The relationship between the Tibetans and Mongols between the 17th and 19th centuries shifted from 'priest-patron' to 'holy master-humble disciple.' Mongolia's second conversion to Buddhism is reflected in the words attributed to Altan Khan in 1578: 'In short, everything in this country should be done in the way it is done in Tibet' (Atwood 2004: 537). Due to this official goal and the subsequent change of Mongolian political condition, Mongolia succumbed to Tibetan spiritual dominance. Many things Tibetan became predominant, authoritative, and even holy in Mongolia. Tibetan dominance can be shown in the treatment of Tibetan and Mongolian monks, and in religious language policy.

1. Tibetan lamas were considered to be more authoritative and accomplished than their Mongol counterparts. After the national conversion, the power and influence of Tibetan Buddhist authorities such as the Dalai and Panchen lamas were predominant throughout Mongolia. Anything related to the Dalai and Panchen lamas was treated as sacred and any words uttered by them were considered to be holy. Mongols refer to the Dalai Lama as Dalai Boḡda (His Holiness the Dalai) or Boḡda Dalai Lama (His Holiness the Dalai Lama), and to the Panchen Lama as Panchen Boḡda (His Holiness the Panchen) or Panchen Erdeni (Panchen the Jewel). In Mongolia, only the Jebtsundamba Khutuḡtu was accepted officially and popularly as *boḡda*, but he was ranked after the Dalai and Panchen lamas. The popularity of the prophecies issued in the name of the Dalai and Panchen lamas as well as the Jebtsundamba Khutuḡtu among the Mongols at the crucial threshold of the 20th century exemplifies the influence of these figures (Borjigin 2006:28–30).

The conventional supremacy of Tibetan Buddhist authorities started when the Third Dalai Lama sent his representatives to Mongolia for missionary work. The second Dūngkūr (Tib. Dus 'khor) named Yon tan rgya mtsho had the title of Mañjuśrī Khutuḡtu

conferred upon him by the Third Dalai Lama on the occasion of his meeting with Altan Khan. Then the Dalai Lama sent him to Mongolia with Altan Khan. Later, Mañjuśrī Khutugtu was invited to go to spread Buddhism in Outer Mongolia among the Khalkhas, and his reincarnation was found in West Mongolia among Oirats (Li 1989, 105). Similarly, Lama Sodnam Dagba (Bsod names grags pa) was given the title Maidari Khutugtu (Maitreya Khutugtu, 1574–1633) and went to Mongolia (Elverskog 2003: 161). Shiditu gabju³⁴ Lama accompanied the Third Dalai Lama on his second visit to Mongolia in 1585 and stayed there as his representative, conducting religious affairs after his master's death. Because he was given the title Pandita Gütshi Chorji by the Dalai Lama and installed on the throne of the Dalai Lama in Shiregetü Juu Monastery, he was known as Shiregetü Gütshi Chorji or simply Shiregetü Khutugtu.³⁵ His reincarnations have been continuously identified and installed in the same monastery until the present day. The eleventh reincarnation, born in 1943, still holds the seat. He is more simply called Jamsu Gegen and is now the oldest officially recognised reincarnation in Inner Mongolia (Delige 1998: 328). The First Jebtsundamba Khutugtu (1635–1723) was also recognised as the reincarnation of a Tibetan Lama. He obtained the title Jebtsundamba (Rje btsun dam pa) from the fifth Dalai Lama when he visited Tibet in 1649 at the age of fifteen (Bawden 1961: 45). Jin Chengxiu disputes a commonly agreed upon idea that the Jebtsundamba Khutugtu was the reincarnation of Jebtsun (Tib. Rje btsun) Tārānātha Gungganingbu and suggested he was actually the reincarnation of Jam dbyang chos rje (Jin 2006: 60).

Later many more Tibetan lamas went to Mongolia to preach Buddhism. They were venerated by the local nobles and their subjects. Most of their reincarnations were sought and found by local people, thereby creating new lines of reincarnations in Mongolia (Lobsang and Ürüntuyag-a 1998: 156). Thus, many reincarnations in Mongolia originated from Tibetan lamas. Almost all the major reincarnations in Mongolia and Beijing were found in Tibet or Amdo (then part of Tibet but now Qinghai province of China). This is due to the decision of the Manchu court to find all the succeeding reincarnations of Jebtsundamba Khutugtu in Tibet. This further elevated the Tibetan lamas' prestige. Every incarnate lama discovered in Tibet brought to Mongolia

³⁴ *Shiditü gabju* means 'a *gabju* (title of a scholar, Tib. *dka'bcu*) with *siddhi* (accomplished).' See note 37.

³⁵ Mongolian *Shiregetü* is an equivalent for *khri pa* in Tibetan, the one who is a 'throne holder', i.e. 'a head'.

large entourages that consisted of their family members, tutors and servants. Apart from the officially appointed Tibetan missionary lamas, some wandering lamas, most of whom bore the title of Diyanchi (yogi) as they were accomplished in Tantric practices, went to Mongolia and were made lamas by the locals. Their succeeding reincarnations were also identified by their followers after their death and started new reincarnation lines in Mongolia. Because of this tradition, some Mongols even requested Tibetan Buddhist authorities to send accomplished lamas to them when they built monasteries, as such lamas also reincarnated in Mongolia. For example, Shongkhur Monastery in Khorchin Left Hand North Banner sent four monks with weighty presents to Tibet and requested an accomplished lama from the Sixth Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama granted them Nom-un Güüshi and Jamsarang, the fifth incarnation of Red Mahākāla. The Jamsarang became known as Gejigetü Khubilgan because he never shaved his head but wore his hair long and had a beard. His 12th reincarnation in Khorchin is currently about forty years old and lives in Höhhot, the present capital of Inner Mongolia. Later, ordinary Tibetan lamas also began to go to Mongolia to seek their fortune, where their prestige as Tibetans always enabled them to receive veneration from the locals. Along with Tibetan-originated reincarnations in Mongolia, some native Mongolian reincarnations emerged by obtaining religious titles from the Tibetan Buddhist authorities. As the result, a series of different levels of reincarnations emerged in Mongolian Buddhism. The high reincarnations are khutuḡtu, nom-un khan, gegen, khubilgan, shabrang, bandida, chorji, and gabju.³⁶ The last three titles were usually conferred upon accomplished lamas by the highest Tibetan or Mongolian Buddhist authorities like the Dalai Lama, Panchen Lama, Jangjia Khutuḡtu and Kanjurwa Nom-un

³⁶ *Khutuḡtu* means 'saintly, holy'. It seems to have been used for Buddhist lamas at the time when Altan Khan met the Third Dalai Lama as, for example, the above-mentioned Mañjuśrī Khutuḡtu and Maidar (Maitreya) Khutuḡtu. Later, during the Manchu Qing period, Khutuḡtu was a title granted by the Manchu court for all the major reincarnated lamas residing in Beijing as well as Mongolia. Nom-un khan is an equivalent for *chos rgyal* in Tibetan, *dharma rāja* in Sanskrit, meaning 'king of doctrine.' *Gegen* seems to be a Mongolian word meaning 'the brightness, enlightened one,' but is usually translated as 'Serene Holiness.' It is a common designation for an incarnate lama, which corresponds to the Tibetan *Rin po che*. It can be mistaken to have derived from Tibetan *Dge rgan*, which means teacher. Mongol monks pronounce this word '*gergen*' when they occasionally address their teachers. *Khubilgan* is actually a general term for any reincarnated lama, cf. Tib. *Tulku*, especially before they were installed. It can be said 'xx is a *khubilgan* of xx *Khutuḡtu*.' However, *Khubilgan* also became a title for some minor reincarnations. *Shabrang* was used for a reincarnation in a smaller monastery. Bandida is a distortion of Sanskrit *Paṇḍita* which means 'scholar'. Chorji is a distortion of Tibetan *Chos rje* which means 'king of doctrine,' but was considered inferior to Mongolian Nom-un khan. *Gabju* is also from Tibetan *Dka' bcu* which means 'bachelor's degree, geshe degree in Tashilhunpo monastery, ten ascetic hardships', i. e. a 'great master'.

Khan (see next section of this chapter for a further discussion of the roles of these two lamas).

2. Mongol monks who studied in Tibet contributed to the persistence of Tibetan authority over Buddhism in Mongolia. Many Mongol monks went to Tibet for further study after completing their education in their local monasteries. This became more and more fashionable, as not only most of the reincarnated lamas but also some really devoted ordinary monks went to Tibet to pursue advanced studies. Mongol monks usually went to Gumbum (Tib. *Sku 'bum*) monastery in Qinghai, Labrang (Bla brang) monastery in Amdo, and Sera, Ganden (*Dga' ldan*) and Drepung (*'bras spungs*) monasteries around Lhasa, and Tashilumpo (*Bkra shis lhun po*) in Tsang. The lamas who studied at these monasteries were referred to as Sera Lama, Ganden Lama or Drepung Lama. They usually spent many years in Tibet, endeavouring to earn certain degrees, such as Lharampa (*Lha rams pa*), Dorampa (*Rdo rams pa*) in philosophy, and Ngagrampa (*Sngags ram pa*) in tantrism before returning. Such lamas usually gained great recognition and veneration. On their return to Mongolia, they usually brought back texts, images, and memories of how things ought to be done. The First Jebtsundamba Khutughtu took back with him artists, astrologers, preceptors, and other specialists (Atwood 2004: 537). Most monasteries followed the academic system of Drepung with some variations (Miller 1959, 128–130).

3. An important issue concerns the question of the language used in Mongolian Buddhist practices. From at least the late 17th century, the Tibetan language and script came to dominate Mongolian monastic life and the secular world as well. As a result, by the late 19th century, the Buddhist services (*khurals*) were conducted purely in Tibetan all over Mongolia. Mongolian was often written in Tibetan letters. Novices always began their education by memorizing the pronunciation of Tibetan prayers for five to ten years. According to 1918 statistics, 45% of Khalkha's male population spent some years in a monastery but most left after memorizing the services. The monasteries thus created a large number of lay people who knew how to pronounce Tibetan words but had never learned to actually read or write either Mongolian or Tibetan. Those who stayed in the monasteries to become real monks learned Tibetan, but perhaps only one-tenth learned to read and write Mongolian. Thus, many able lamas were unable to write in the Uyghur Mongolian script, although they were fluent in Tibetan and able to translate it into Mongolian orally (Atwood 2004: 538). Thus, by stressing on Tibetan in Buddhist

practices — using it together with Sanskrit³⁷ in both rituals and the recitation of mantras — this language and script became more mystical, magical and holy for the Mongols. As a result, by the 19th century, every aspect of Tibetan monastic culture was practised in Mongolia. Mongolian monk scholars wrote in Tibetan on a full range of topics, from Buddhist history and hagiographies to Tibetan syntax and art canons. This led to the formation of a major literature written in Tibetan by Mongols.

However, an important point regarding language use in Mongolian Buddhism, may answer the question of how Mongols were such strong converts to Buddhism while Tibetan was so dominant in Mongolian Buddhist practices. Most Mongols did not become so proficient in Tibetan that they were able to fully understand the Buddhist teachings nor in Tibetan, nor were they so superstitious that nearly one-third of the male population became monks without understanding the essential meaning of the teachings. Why have Mongols been so keen on translating the Buddhist canon into Mongolian if Tibetan was officially and popularly accepted as the predominant religious language all over Mongolia? Who was the intended audience of the translated Buddhist canons if all the monks learned Tibetan but only one tenth of them learned Mongolian script in their later phase of studies? A clue lies in the consistent use of Mongolian Buddhist terminology in Pozdneyev's *Religion and Ritual in Society: Lamaist Buddhism in Late 19th century Mongolia* (1978), a detailed ethnography of Buddhism practised in Tibetan in Khalkha. How did Pozdneyev find all those Mongolian terms while investigating Buddhist practices conducted in the Tibetan language?

Although Pozdneyev did not seem to notice the significance of the divergence of language use, his ethnography itself revealed the answer. It was actually the use of Mongolian language in the process of teaching and learning that played a vital role for understanding the doctrine. According to Pozdneyev, a teacher would start to practise the translations of what had been read and learned with a young disciple only after that novice had memorised the entire cycle of requisite prayers. Many of the monks who left the monastery and led ordinary lives knew how to translate orally from Tibetan to Mongolian although they did not learn to read and write Mongolian script (Pozdneyev

³⁷ Apart from a simplest way of 'taking refuge' in Mongolian, such as *lam-a-dur itegemü* (I take refuge in the lama), *burkhan-dur itegemü* (I take refuge in the Buddha), *nom-dur itegemü* (I take refuge in the dharma) and *khuvräg-dur itegemü* (I take refuge in the *sangha*), there are almost no other mantras recited in Mongolian. It is notable that Mongols always add 'taking refuge in the lama' before the usual three refuges like the Tibetans, as well.

1978: 195–197). Here, the word ‘translation’ should be understood as explaining the meaning of the Tibetan prayer texts in Mongolian, which means Mongolian was being used in teaching and learning in those monasteries. For doing so, we can assume, the monks who were qualified to teach a disciple had not only to grasp the basic reading and writing knowledge of Mongolian, but also to accumulate sufficiently profound terminology for explanation in Mongolian. Pozdneyev reveals how this was done. Some of the monks who intended to spend their whole lives in the monastery started to learn Mongolian script (*ibid*). After receiving *getsul* vows, those monks were able to study both ‘dogmatic and ritual doctrines’ by choosing a special tutor whose duty was to grant the students authorisation to study the sacred books and explain unintelligible questions as well as to guide their studies (Pozdneyev 1978: 204). It can be inferred from this that the tutor must still have been translating and explaining the meaning of the teachings or scriptures in Mongolian. This point can be verified by Kanjurwa Khutuḡtu, who, when describing his training in the famous Badḡar Monastery, recounted, ‘It was our custom to debate in the Mongolian language but also to use many technical Sanskrit or Tibetan terms. All scriptures or evidence submitted for proof or support had to be given in Tibetan’ (Hyer & Jaḡchid 1983: 73–74). In Badḡar Monastery, noted for its academic excellence, Buddhist chanting was supposedly performed in Tibetan, but it is evident that Mongolian was being used for other purposes. Without the specialised Mongolian language of Buddhist doctrine, debating in Mongolian would not have been easy. The question is how was such specialised Mongolian language acquired? Kanjurwa Khutuḡtu admits ‘for our study of scripture and texts, and for various rituals and ceremonies, we depend mainly on the *Kanjur*, the Tibetan collection of sacred texts. The *Kanjur* itself has been translated into Mongolian, but many other texts have not yet been translated and thus we must depend considerably on the original Tibetan texts’ (Hyer & Jaḡchid 1983: 88). This implies that the monks of Badḡar Monastery tended to use Mongolian texts as long as they were available and had to depend ‘mainly’ on the original Tibetan texts for lack of translations. The specialised Mongolian terms must have been acquired not only through reading already translated texts, but also most importantly through the teachers’ explanations of the scriptures, including those in Tibetan. If Badḡar Monastery was so, it is reasonable to assume that the local banner and district monasteries that were consistently regarded as practising Buddhism in Tibetan were using more Mongolian than Badḡar Monastery. In this case, the major role for the

Tibetan Line of Mongolian Buddhism in respect to language use was some Tibetan chanting in religious services and some quotations in Tibetan in debates.

2. Manchu political control

The religio-political situation in Mongolia was similar to Tibet in the sense that 'adaptation of Buddhism was at least in part a matter of state policy. Buddhist temples and monasteries were part of the panoply of state power, and were expected to aid in maintaining that state power' (Samuel 1993: 555). Not to mention the first diffusion of Buddhism in Mongolia, which was purely political, the second diffusion marked by the meeting of Altan Khan and the Third Dalai Lama was also essentially political. However, the situation of Mongolian Buddhism is quite different from Tibetan Buddhism when it comes to its relationship to the state. Tibetan Buddhism 'established itself outside the context of state sponsorship, as a part of Tibetan village communities. The weakness of state power meant that there was a lack of any authority able to enforce the process of clericalisation' (Samuel 1993: 556); Tibetan societies are diverse societies rather than a society; there was a lack of centralised government in the pre-modern era. Central Tibet, ruled by the Dalai Lama's government and the great monastic institutions around Lhasa, form only part of the context within which Tibetan Buddhism, and Tibetan religion as a whole, took shape and operated (Samuel 1993: 3–5). Not long after the second conversion of the Mongols, Mongolia's political sovereignty was lost to the Manchu, and Manchu rulers became the patrons of Mongolian Buddhism. They used Buddhism as an important supplementary device for controlling the Mongols in order to secure their rule over Mongolia. This section looks at Manchu strategies in relation to Mongolian Buddhism.

The spiritual belief and practices that the Manchu adhered to is currently called 'shamanism'. However, Manchu rulers had shown some interest in Tibetan Buddhism as early as the time of Nurhachi (1558–1626)³⁸. He had seven monasteries built in his homeland (Bulağ 2003: 249). The Tibetan Lama Ulug Darkhan Nangsu, who had been a successful missionary among the Mongols, was accepted by Nurhachi as a teacher

³⁸ Nurhachi, the Manchu ruler, was the founder of the Later Jin Dynasty (1616–1636). He united his Nuzhen people and laid the foundation of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911). After his death, when the Qing was founded, Nurhachi was given the posthumous title of Qing Taizu, meaning 'the first emperor of the Qing Dynasty.'

(Jagchid 1988: 142). In the process of dealing with Buddhism politically, some members of the Manchu royal family became interested in it spiritually. For example, the Kangxi Emperor's seventeen son Gense Qin Wang was a devoted Buddhist. Emperor Yongzheng (r. 1723–1735) transformed the residence in which he had lived before he was enthroned into a Buddhist monastery which became the well-known Yong He Gong in Beijing. Under Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736–1795), a number of Manchu temples were built, such as Long Fu Si in the East Imperial Tomb, Yong Fu Si in the West Imperial Tomb, Zheng Jue Si in Yuan Ming Yuan, Gong De Si in Beijing, and Shu Xiang Si in Cheng De (his summer palace). In 1773, a Manchu script printing house was set up and the Tibetan Kanjur was translated into Manchu and kept in the Manchu Temples. Emperor Qianlong also took Buddhist vows from the Sixth Panchen Lama (Delige 1998: 155). The interest taken in Buddhism by the Manchu royal family inspired confidence in the Mongols. Needing support because of the threat of invasion by the Oirats Jungar State, the Khalkha nobles of Outer Mongolia asked advice from Jebtsundamba Khutughtu. He pointed out that, although Russia was a peaceful and great country, it was not Buddhist. China, by contrast, was firmly established and peaceful, and was also Buddhist. Therefore, he advised them to submit themselves to the Manchu Emperor (Bawden 1961: 45–46). The Buddhist faith of the Manchus was, then, an important consideration in the Khalkha Mongols' submission. However, although Manchu rulers showed some interest in Buddhism, Buddhism was actually prohibited among ordinary Manchu people. In general, Manchu belief in Buddhism was quite similar to that of the Mongol Yuan rulers. There were only about 200 Manchu monks during the time of Qianlong. The Manchu was to use Buddhism to pacify the Mongols. The golden statue of the Mahākāla of the Great Yuan Dynasty was presented together with the jade seal of the Mongol state to the Hung Taiji³⁹ in 1634 after the defeat and death of Ligdan Khan, the last emperor of the North Yuan dynasty. This symbolised the submission of the Mongols' political power to the Manchu. The Manchu Emperor took this event seriously and received it by kneeling down three times and with nine prostrations. In 1638, a temple was built for the Mahākāla outside the West gate of the capital Sheng Jing

³⁹ Hung Taiji is a Mongolian pronunciation of the Chinese Huang Taizi, meaning 'royal prince'. In 1635, Huang Taiji, the eighth son of Nurhachi, chose the name Manchu for his people to replace Nuzhen. In the following year, when he ascended the throne, he adopted Great Qing as the name of his dynasty. He unified the whole of China, initiating nearly 300 years of Manchu rule throughout the country. He had two reign names such as Tian Cong (1627–1636), and Chong De (1636–1643).

(present Shen Yang) called Shi Sheng Si ('Temple of True Victory'). Mongols call it 'Mahākāla Temple'.

When the Kangxi Emperor was recognised as a reincarnation of Mañjuśrī and was referred to as *Mañjuśrī Bogda Ejen* (Holy Lord Mañjuśrī), the Manchu Emperor not only took up the title 'Holy Lord,' which had previously only been used by Mongols for Chinggis Khan (Elverskog 2006: 79), but also claimed himself to be the reincarnation of Mañjuśrī⁴⁰ (Farquhar 1978: 5–34). This signifies the Manchu ruler's complete control over Mongol's spiritual life. In his stone inscription in the monastery in Chengde⁴¹, the Kangxi Emperor said 'Mongol tribes are straightforward and brave. They had not been defeated in the time of the three *Huang* and had not been conquered in the time of the five *dis*⁴². 'They only listen to the word of lamas' (Bulağ 2003, 247). Emperor Qianlong's (1736–1795) inscription *Lama Shuo* (On the Lamas) is a typical example of the Manchu ruler's policy towards Buddhism in Mongolia. This inscription was composed by Emperor Qianlong in 1792. It was written on a stone tablet and erected in Yong He gong temple in Beijing. He said,

The Yellow Religion both outside and inside [the empire] is ruled by both [the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Erdeni] and all the Mongols follow them wholeheartedly. Therefore, to develop the Yellow Religion is a measure to win over the Mongols. The consequence [of this policy] is no small matter because [the religion] should be patronised. This is not to honour vainly or to flatter the Tibetan monks as happened in the Yuan Dynasty (Jağchid 1988, 143).

The Manchu approach towards Buddhism in Mongolia was on the one hand to encourage and on the other hand to control. In the early period of Manchu rule, in order to win the confidence of the Mongols, the Manchu strategy was to encourage the expansion of Buddhism in Mongolia in order to win the Mongols' loyalty to the Manchu rulers and to weaken the Mongolian military spirit. After they had gained control of Mongolia, their main tactic was to control Buddhist affairs in Mongolia in various ways. Firstly, Manchu rulers encouraged the construction of monasteries. Most of the monasteries in Mongolia were built in the time of Kangxi (r. 1662–1722), Yongzheng (r. 1723–1735) and Qianlong (r. 1736–1795). In order to encourage the growth of Buddhism in Mongolia, the Manchu Emperors built thirty-three monasteries in Beijing,

⁴⁰ For the significance of Mañjuśrī in Mongolia, see chapter 6.

⁴¹ Chengde was formerly called *Rehe* (*Jehol*), and was the capital of the now defunct Rehe province. Chengde is best known as the summer residence of the early Qing Dynasty emperors.

⁴² The three *huang* and five *dis* all refer to powerful early Chinese emperors.

the capital, eight in Chengde, the summer residence, twenty-four in Wu Tai Shan⁴³ and ten in Mugden (contemporary Shen Yang), the old capital. Some of these were imperial monasteries and some were built by the Mongol nobles. Most of the monks of these monasteries were from Mongolia and the pilgrims were also mostly Mongols. In the 18th century, monastery building reached its height. Da Kūriye (contemporary Ulaanbaatar), Höhhot and Dolon-nuur⁴⁴ were the centres of Buddhism in Mongolia. Apart from Da Kūriye, which was a massive monastic town, there were fifteen major and seventy-two minor monasteries in the Höhhot area, and nineteen in Dolon-nuur. In addition, monasteries were located in different levels of Mongolian administrative units, such as the banner (*khoshigu*), arrow (*sumu*) and village (*gachag-a*), and nobles and the wealthy had family monasteries (Bulağ 2003: 251–254; Delige 1998: 145–152).

Secondly, the Manchu rulers encouraged Mongols to be monks. The monks in imperial and other major monasteries were chosen from monasteries all over Mongolia and their maintenance was paid by the state. Generally, all monks were exempt from the military and all other public services and taxes. Mongols liked to send their sons to the monasteries, normally keeping one son behind to continue the lineage of the family. As a result, towards the end of the Qing dynasty, 40–50% of the male population of Mongolia became monks (Delige 1998: 152–158; Bulağ 2003: 254–257). Even at the end of the Qing Dynasty, there were still those who openly praised the success of this Manchu policy to weaken Mongolia. One such analyst said, ‘the rule of our dynasty over the Mongols is to establish more feudal units, to divide their power, to honour Buddhism, to control their birth rate, and thus to half the disaster of the Hsiungnu and Uyghur. The art is very marvellous’ (Jagchid 1988: 136). Kangxi said ‘Building one monastery equals to keeping a hundred thousand soldiers’ (Delige 1998, 146).

Thirdly, Manchu rulers used Mongolian high lamas or ‘ecclesiastical nobility’ (Jagchid 1988, 133) very tactfully. Manchu rulers took special measures to use the influence of already established high lamas’ to increase Mongol loyalty towards the

⁴³ Wu Tai Shan Mountain is located in the north of Shanxi Province of Northern China. It had been an important Chinese Buddhist holy mountain since the middle of the 1st century CE of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). It is believed to be the residence of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. During the Qing Dynasty, twenty-four ‘Yellow School’ monasteries were established by changing some originally Chinese Buddhist monasteries into Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and building new ones. Since then, Mongols have had tremendous faith in going on pilgrimage to Wu Tai Shan.

⁴⁴ Dolon-nuur was previously the summer residence of a princess of the Manchu court. It was turned into a monastery and became the centre of Inner Mongolian Buddhist affairs as it was assigned to Jangjia Khutuḡtu, who was the ‘great teacher of the state’ holding the seal (*tamaḡ-a*) of Lama of the Office, established by the Manchus for supervision and control of Buddhist affairs.

Manchu court. All religious ranks or titles had to be authorised by the government and bestowed by the Emperor. The state not only kept the original reincarnations and titles, but also established new incarnations by bestowing new titles as well as old. The new titles were Nom-un Khan (Emperor of doctrine), Jasağ Lama, (Ruling Lama), Da Lama (Grand Lama i.e. Head Lama), Da Guoshi (Great State Preceptor). Among all the ranks, including those of Mongolian, Tibetan and Manchu origins, the most honoured title is Khutuḡtu. There were four highest khutuḡtus: Jangjia Khutuḡtu, Ġaldan-Shiregetü Khutuḡtu, Mingyur Khutuḡtu and Jilung Khutuḡtu. Then there were 'The Eight Khutuḡtus of Beijing': Duinkhor Khutuḡtu, Gomang Khutuḡtu, Namkha Khutuḡtu, Asar Khutuḡtu, Ragua Khutuḡtu, Ajia Khutuḡtu, Guntang Khutuḡtu and Tuguan Khutuḡtu. At the end of the Qing Dynasty, the number of khutuḡtu increased to twelve. Apart from these, there was the Jebtsundamba Khutuḡtu in Khalkha Mongolia, and Shikür-Shiregetü-Noyan-Chorji Khutuḡtu in Dolon-nuur. Next to khutuḡtus were those who bore various levels of khubilḡan titles. There were fifty-five officially registered khubilḡans by the Manchu Court in the time of Emperor Yongzheng and this increased to 243 in the time of Emperor Guangxu (r. 1875–1908). The Manchu rulers gave special honours to these lamas by elevating their social position and economic benefits. Such high lamas usually had their own fiefs, secular disciples (*shabinar*)⁴⁵ and flocks of animals. The Manchu court created a kind of theocracy in Mongolia. There were seven Lama banners, the highest rulers of such banners were Jasağ Lamas ('ruling lama') who had the same political power and position as lay Jasağ Wang (Ruling princes) of the other banners (Delige 1998: 159; Bulag 2003: 257–258).

By such encouragement, the Manchus were able to control both Buddhism and Mongolia, a grip that became tighter and tighter in the later period of Manchu rule. As the first two incarnations of Jebtsundamba Khutuḡtu were born to the Khalkha Tüshiyetü Khan, who was the descendent of Chinggis Khan, and when his influence was also expanding to southern Mongols, the Manchu rulers realised that there was the possibility of uniting the Mongols under this Mongolian religious leader. In order to eliminate this possibility, the Manchu Emperor decided to stop finding the succeeding Jebtsundamba Khutuḡtu's reincarnation in Mongolia but rather to look in Tibet. Thus, all the

⁴⁵ 'Secular disciples' refers to the serfs of the monastery or high lamas, who might have been: 1. Bestowed by the Qing Court after collecting people from many banners (Shiregetü Küriy-e Banner). 2. Offered by lay nobles 3. People who voluntarily subjected themselves in order to avoid paying military and other public services and taxes to the lay administration. 4. Refugees from other places.

reincarnations of the Jebtsundamba Khutugtu after the third were found in Tibet (Delige 1998: 163–165; Bulağ 2003: 273). Subsequently, Emperor Qianlong ordered that Mongolian reincarnations could not be found in a Mongolian noble's family (Bulağ 2003: 273).

While constraining the Mongolian religious leader's influence on politics by restricting the Jebtsundamba's rebirth to Tibet, Emperor Qianlong also limited Tibetan influence over Buddhism in Mongolia by changing the method of recognition of reincarnations. Previously, all reincarnations in Mongolia had to be recognised by the Dalai and the Panchen Lamas in the same way as Tibetan reincarnations had been recognised. Emperor Qianlong established a method called 'drawing lots from the golden urn (*bumba*, Tib. *bum pa*)' in 1792. One *bumba* was placed in Lhasa for recognising Tibetan reincarnations and the Jebtsundamba Khutugtu, administered by Manchu official stationed in Lhasa. Another *bumba* was placed in Yong He Gong Monastery in Beijing for choosing Mongolian reincarnations, administered by the Li Fan Yuan⁴⁶. When choosing a reincarnation, the names of several candidates were written on sticks, and put in an urn and the urn was then sealed. After lamas have read sūtras, one lot was drawn from the *bumba*, and thus the new reincarnation would be decided. In order to further control Buddhism in Mongolia, Manchu rulers adapted methods that are more rigorous. They installed the Jangjia Khutugtu line of reincarnation in Inner Mongolia in 1693 to counterbalance the Jebtsundamba Khutugtu's influence. Jangjia Khutugtu was conferred upon Jasag da Lama (Ruling Grand Lama) and *Da* Guoshi (Great State Teacher). Both the first and second incarnations were neither from Tibet nor from Mongolia but from the Monguors (Tu)⁴⁷ ethnicity of Gansu. In order to weaken power of high lamas, they established two posts namely Shangjudba (Tib. *Phyag mdzod pa*) and Khambo (Tib. *Mkhan po*) lama to manage administrative and religious affairs separately. They issued Certificate of Renunciation (Chi. *Dudie* 度牒) to control the number of monks in a temple. They also decided that all the major reincarnate lamas had

⁴⁶ The Lifan Yuan (literally Court of Administration of the Dependencies, commonly translated as Court of Colonial Affairs) was the organ of the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912) charged with administering first the Mongols and later all the Empire's Inner Asian dependencies. The Lifan Yuan was originally created in 1636 as the Mongol Department (Man. *Monggūl jurgan*; Mon. *Monggūl jurgan*). In 1638, it was renamed the Lifan Yuan, or in Mongolian the 'Court of Administration of the Autonomous Mongolian States' (*Gadagadu Monggūl-un törö-yi zasakhu yabudal-un yamun*) with a mandate to handle all affairs relating to the autonomous Mongol banners. As the Qing Dynasty's empire expanded further into Inner Asia, so did the court's competence. Until 1861, the court also handled relations with Russia and the dynasty's other northern and western neighbours (Atwood 2004:333).

⁴⁷ The Tu Monguors live in Gansu Province, NW China. Their language is closely related to Mongolian.

to go on duty to Beijing every six years in turn. The purpose of the Manchu policy towards Buddhism in Mongolia is summarised by Jagchid as follows:

1. To establish Lamaist institutions as a counterbalance to the secular power of Mongolian princes.
2. To limit the power of the great Mongolian religious leaders and to forestall the unification of theocratic power and political power.
3. To reduce political ties and relations between Mongolia and Tibet and to strengthen the ties between Mongolian monasteries and Beijing institutions.
4. To create high governmental religious leaders as a political instrument to check the influence of the local Mongolian leaders (Jagchid 1988, 147).

As the result of Manchu rulers' tactical manipulation over three centuries, Mongols came to identify themselves as 'Mongols of Buddhist Qing' (Elverskog 2006: 94).

The spiritual and political control factors described above have determined Mongolian Buddhism as Gelukpa- dominant Buddhism.

3. Gelukpa-dominant Buddhism

In the beginning of the second diffusion of Buddhism in Mongolia, before the Mongols had submitted to the Manchu, Mongolian society was in a state of disintegration. The legitimate Mongol Khan, Ligdan has lost his power. For a short period of time, there was a tendency towards a situation similar to that of the Tibetan 'local hegemonic period' (Samuel 1993: 457). Buddhism was adopted by individual Mongolian political powers separately. Not long after the Mongols' second conversion to Buddhism, there were lamas from different Tibetan Buddhist schools, such as Kagyüpa, Nyingmapa and Karmapa came to Mongolia and some Mongol rulers patronised these schools. There were such lamas even in the service of Altan Khan. Ligdan Khan (1604–1634) and his ally Chogtu Taiji of Outer Mongolia supported the Kagyü School (Serruys 1962; Jagchid 1988: 121–127, Elverskog 2003: 169). It is also said that Ligdan Khan implicitly patronised the Sakyapa School and installed in his capital an image of Mahakala previously said to have been given to Phakpa by Khubilai (Atwood 2004: 559). Eastern Inner Mongols, led by the Khorchin, became followers of Neichi Toyin's Mongolian Line of Buddhist Practices. Tümen Jasaḡtu Khan (b. 1539, r. 1558–1592) appointed a

Tibetan Buddhist lama of the Karmapa School. Khalkha khans created their own holy lama Jebtsundamba Khutugtu whose first two incarnations were found in Tüshiyetü Khan family. Although the Oirat Mongols followed the Gelukpa School of Buddhism, they adopted it as a separate political power. At this early time, Buddhist practices in Mongolia were quite diverse, and there was no universal clerical system or religious institution. Apart from different Buddhist centres attached to different political powers, individual lamas, especially those so-called *diyanchi* lamas (yogins)⁴⁸ set up their own centres in mountain caves and remote places and gathered their own disciples.

However, in addition to the influence of the Gelukpa School in Mongolia since the meeting of Altan Khan and the Third Dalai Lama, two more factors determined the Gelukpa as the dominant Buddhist school to be practised in Mongolia. One is, the Fifth Dalai Lama's claim to power with the support of the Oirat Mongol Güüshi Khan (also known as Güshri, b. 1582, r. 1642–1655), and the other is meeting of the Fifth Dalai Lama and Manchu Emperor Shunzhi (r. 1644–1661) in 1650.

Recognising the Kangxi Emperor as a reincarnation of Mañjuśrī also identified him to Gelukpa School, because Tsongkhapa, the founder of the school was recognised as an earthly manifestation of Mañjuśrī. Emperor Qianlong's *Lama Shuo*, as seen above, clearly says the Yellow Religion was under the control of the Dalai and Panchen lamas, and all the Mongols followed them wholeheartedly. Developing the Yellow Religion was a measure to win over the Mongols.

Thus, Gelukpa-dominant Buddhism became the sole authorised religion of the Mongols. Since then Mongolian Buddhism has been unified under the Gelukpa School and organised into Manchu controlled monastic and clerical institutions. As seen in the last two sections, the influential lamas from Tibet to Mongolia eventually became Gelukpa lamas, and the Mongolian monks who studied in Tibet went to Gelukpa monasteries and received Gelukpa teachings. The major Khutugtus resided in Beijing were all Gelukpa lamas.

⁴⁸ *Diyanchi* derives from the Sanskrit *dhyāna*; with the Mongolian suffix *-chi*, it means 'one who does meditation' or a 'mediator' in this case. *Diyanchi* may refer to those who undertake temporary contemplation for a short period of retreat, but it is mostly used to refer to those who devote most of their lives to meditation in isolation from society.

Mongols, including modern intellectuals, refer to their own religion as Yellow Religion (Naranbatu 1997: 44; Bulaḡ 2003: 193).⁴⁹ Tsongkhapa is its figurehead and in practice, he is even more popular than the Buddha Śākyamuni among the Mongols. Tsongkhapa is referred to as Boḡda Lama by the Mongol clergy and even called Buddha Tsongkhapa by ordinary people. In the Gelukpa School of Buddhism Tsongkhapa was considered to be the Second Buddha whom Buddha Śākyamuni prophesised to rectify Buddhism when it fell into chaos (Zhou 1994: 31–37). For the same reason, the 25th of the tenth lunar month, which is Tsongkhapa's birthday, is remembered by everybody and grandly celebrated every year. Since it is customary for 1000 oil lamps to be lit, the occasion is called a 'thousand-lamp-service' (*mingḡan jula-yin khural*). In contrast, the Buddha Śākyamuni's birthday was not so popularly known and celebrated. Thus, Gelukpa became the predominant Buddhist school among the Mongols under the Tibetan spiritual dominance and Manchu political control.

4. Mongolian Buddhist literary work

Although Buddhism in Mongolia was predominantly Tibetan Gelukpa, Mongols have been trying to make Buddhism Mongolian from the time of their first conversion to it. The first evidence of this is in the translation of scriptures, and production of original literary works. In this section, I discuss three categories of literary production by Mongol Buddhist scholars: translation of scriptures, works written in Tibetan, and works written in Mongolian.

Translation of scriptures

In spite of the prevalent use of Tibetan in Mongolian Buddhist practice, Mongols have constantly tried to put doctrine into their own language. This section outlines the Mongolian translation of Buddhist literature based on some secondary sources (Rinchinkawa 1986; 1990; Cheringsodnam 2001; Bulaḡ 2003, vol.2: 622–684; Choiji 2003).

⁴⁹ Since Tsongkhapa, the founder of Gelukpa School of Tibetan Buddhism and his followers all wore yellow hats, the Gelukpa School is also known as the Yellow School, Yellow Sect or Yellow Hat Sect.

Since the first diffusion of Buddhism, the translation of Buddhist texts has been an important endeavour. One of the earliest known translations into Mongolia was the 'Story of Kalina Dimna' from the Persian 'Pañcatantra' (Damdinsürüng1959:182). Chojjiodsar (Chos kyi 'od zer)⁵⁰ translated Śāntideva's *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* in 1305. Chojjiodsar's complete original translation is not available at present, but twelve pages were found in Turfan and published by W. Heissig and F.W. Cleaves in 1950 (Bulağ 2003: 624). However, Urad Güüshi Biligündalai made corrections to Chojjiodsar's translation and printed it in 1748. In the colophon, he noted that 1000 copies of Chojjiodsar's translation had been printed in 1305. Chojjiodsar also translated *Pancarāṅka* in 1308. The original manuscript is not available but its 1671 printed version is extant (Rinchinkawa 1986: 20–31; Bulağ 2003: 223–225; Choji 2003: 2298–308). Shirabsenge (Shes rab seng ge)⁵¹ translated the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra* into Mongolian from Uyghur, Tibetan and Chinese versions of it in the 1330s. The colophon states that he was assisted by an Indian scholar called Boniya Bhadra (Tib. Bsod nams bzang po) who knew Sanskrit. This translation was printed in 1659 and later was included into the block-printed *Kanjur* (Rinchinkawa 1986: 31–33; Bulağ 2003: 226–227; Choji 2003: 342–357). During the Yuan Dynasty, there was a Uyghur translator called Biranashiri⁵² who translated into Mongolian the *Laṅkāyvatāra-sūtra* from Chinese, *Sūtra Mahāparinirvāna*, *Eulogy of the Quality of the Mahāyāna* from Sanskrit, and *Acintya Samādhi Sūtra* from Tibetan. He also translated *Sapta-Buddhaka nāma mahā-yāna-sūtra* from Chinese in 1328 (Rinchinkawa1990: 125; Choji 2003: 269). Although translations of scriptures were scarce during the first conversion, the Mongols were eager to have Buddhist scriptures in their own language. If it is true as Biligündalai

⁵⁰ Chojjiodsar was the first known translator of Buddhist texts into Mongolian. He mastered Mongolian, Uyghur, Tibetan and Sanskrit. His ethnic origin and the exact year of his birth and death are not known. The information extant about his life only shows his work from 1305–1321. The Mongolian scholar Cheringsodnam (spelled Tserensodnom in Cyrillic publications, I follow the spelling as it appears in Mongolian script publications) wrote about him in his monograph (Bulağ 2003: 663) and said that 'no matter whether Chojjiodsar was born in Uyghur, Mongolia or Tibet, since he studied in a Sakya monastery and pursued the principle of this school, he was known as Sakya Chojjiodsar' (Cheringsodnam 1991: 19).

⁵¹ Shirebsenge's ethnic origin is not known.

⁵² Biranashiri's original name was Jilawanidari. He learned Uyghur and Sanskrit when he was young, and many other languages later. He received initiation from the teacher of then Emperor and was given the name Biranashiri. He started translating Buddhist texts from Sanskrit at the order of the Emperor Ayurparibhadra in 1312–1313. The Yuan emperors bestowed upon him a silver seal in 1314, a gold seal in 1323, a jade seal in 1331, and conferred upon him the titles Tegüs Ukhamjitu (Perfectly Wise'), Tergel Sara (Full Moon), Örgen Geigülügchi (Wide Illuminator) and Todu Ilgagchi Ğurban Aimag Sudur-un Güüshi (Master of Clearly Discriminating the Three Baskets, Tripiṭaka).

stated that one thousand copies of Choijiodsar's translation of *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* had been printed in its first edition, then we have reason to believe that many people were interested in reading the text in Mongolian (Bulaḡ 2003: 625).

Extensive and systematic translations were made after the second conversion. in 1579, Altan Khan ordered a new translation of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra* into Mongolian (Bulaḡ 2003: 627). Altan Khan's nephew Toyin Choijamsu translated *Mañjuśrīnāma-saṃgīti* and published a block print of it in Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese and Mongolian in 1591 (Bulaḡ 2003: 269).

Those monks who studied in Tibet during the second half of the 16th century provided a good foundation for the dissemination of Buddhism and for the translation of a whole range of texts in the succeeding century. A distinctive example of such work is Ayushi Gütishi's creation of Mongolian *Alikali* (Skt. *Āli-kāli*) script. In 1587, in order to solve the problem of transcribing foreign words in the Mongolian script, Ayushi Gütishi created a new *galig* (transcription system) to enable the Mongolian script to accommodate the different sounds of Sanskrit and Tibetan. Mongols called this transcription system *Alikali üsüg* (means *Āli-kāli* script). It was important to ensure the proper pronunciation of the *dhāraṇīs* (Bulaḡ 2003: 628).

The 17th to 19th centuries marked the golden period of Mongolian Buddhism and the translation of Buddhist texts into Mongolian. Many outstanding translators emerged in this period. Dzaya Pandita Namkhajamsu (Nam mkha'i rgya mtsho) translated over seventy texts himself and 200 in all with help from his disciples. All the subjects of Buddhist doctrine and scholarship are included in his translation. Biographies (Mon. *namtar*, Tib. *namthar*) and *jātaka* (Mon. *chadig*) were also widely translated. Shiregetü Gütishi Chorji stayed in Höhhot and translated many texts into Mongolian between 1587 and 1628. His translation also includes a wide range of subjects and genres of Buddhist literature, including *Prajñāpāramitā in Ten Thousand Verses*, *Vajrabhairava tantra*, *Śāstra with Complete Essence that are in Important Use* (Tib. *Shes-bya Rab-gsal*),⁵³ *Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (Tib. *Lamrim*), *Sūtra of Maudgalyāna's Returning the Favour of His Mother*, *Ocean of Examples* (Tib. *Mdzangs blun źes bya ba'i mdo*),

⁵³ Scholars find Gütishi Chorji's translation is so distinctive that it can be seen as his independent work (Cheringsodnam 2001: 148–149).

The Songs of Milarepa and Biography of Milarepa (Rinchinkawa 1990: 177–179; Cheringsodnam 2001: 138–148; Bulaḡ 2003: 629–632).

Many of these translations were printed in the 18th century. *Pad ma bka' thang* was printed around 1700, two volumes of *Sungdui* (*Gzungs bsdus*) were translated by Gütiishi Chorji and Güngga-odsar (kun dga' 'od zer) and printed in 1707, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra* in 1711, *Great Liberation upon Hearing in the Intermediate State* (Tib. *Bar do thos grol*) in 1714 (Bulaḡ 2003: 632–633).

About 800 Mongolian translations of Buddhist texts were found bearing the seal of Gense Qin Wang.⁵⁴ Most of these texts were translated in the beginning of 18th century, and a small number of them were translated in the 16th and 17th centuries. Some are works of early Indian scholars; most are works from different Tibetan Buddhist schools. About 500 texts are 'Hidden Texts' (Tib. *gter ma*) of the Nyingmapa School. The remaining 300 texts belong to other schools. Some works of the First (Fourth) Panchen Lama blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan and the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag dbang bLo bzang rgya mtsho were included, which were translated by the Oirat Dzaya Pandita Namkhajamsu (Bulaḡ 2003: 633–643).

Mongol translators were highly qualified in Buddhist doctrine and mastered both Tibetan and Mongolian languages. Translators were called *orchigulugchi* (translator), *dal keleten* (a master of many languages), *lozawa* (Tib. *lo tsa ba*, translator) and *güüshi*; those who knew many languages and who prolific were called *da güüshi* (great translator), *biligtü güüshi* (gifted translator), *nomchi güüshi* (translator who has mastered doctrine), *ülemji oyutu güüshi* (translator who has vast intellect) and *khurcha oyutu güüshi* (translator who has a sharp mind) (Bulaḡ 2003, 622–644; Rinchinkawa 1986). The greatest achievement of this era was the translation and printing of 108 volumes of the *Kanjur* and 225 volumes of *Tanjur*.

⁵⁴ Gense Qin Wang is the Manchu title of Yun Li, the seventeenth son of Emperor Kangxi. He was called Eres Chin Wang in Mongolian, Guo Qin Wang or Guo Yi Qin Wang in Chinese. He also had many other names such as Buddha Guru *Rtshal*, Anuwaka Bazar, Lobsangwangjildorji and Belge Bilig-ün Vachir Küchüttü. He was born to one of Emperor Kangxi's Manchu wives in 1697 and died in 1738. He was a devoted Buddhist. He refers to Kanjurwa Nom-un Khan Lobsangchultem as his teacher in his work. He wrote several books on secret tantras in Mongolian and translated several books from Tibetan into Mongolian. He was especially keen on the Nyingmapa School and encouraged lamas who resided in Beijing to study Nyingmapa texts. Most of these texts are currently held in the Library of Inner Mongolia Normal University, brought there from Beijing in the 1970s (Bulaḡ 2003, 636–639).

Mongolian Kanjur and Tanjur

Some scholars think that a group of translators headed by Ayushi Güüshi and Shiregetü Güüshi translated the 108 volumes of Kanjur between 1602 and 1607, following the account of this contained in the *Jewel Translucent Sūtra* (*Erdeni tonumal neretü sudur*), the biography of Altan Khan (Jürüנגг-a 1984: 179). However, according to the Mongolian historical sources *Golden Wheel with a Thousand Spokes* (*Altan kürdün minggan kegesütü*) by Darma Güüshi (Choiji 1987: 148) and *Golden Rosary* (*Altan Erike*) by Na Ta (Choiji 1989: 109–111), Güngga-odser (Kun dga' 'od zer), Samdansengge (Bsam gtan seng ge) and Güntang Güüshi started to collect and sort out the previous translations, made new translations of missing sections and compiled 113 volumes of the *Golden Kanjur* based on the Tibetan *Kanjur* under the order of Ligdan Khan in 1629. This translation was written in gold and the *Golden Kanjur* was worshipped as the guardian of the state by Ligdan Khan.⁵⁵

The review and printing of the 108-volume *Kanjur* was completed in the beginning of the 18th century. In 1717, the Kangxi Emperor appointed Rashi, the First Officer (*Hiya*) of Qian Qing Gate, to organise Mongol nobles and scholars to make donations for a block print of the Mongol *Kanjur*. Within six months, a completed draft was checked against the Tibetan *Kanjur*. In the eleventh month of the same year, the draft was given to Rashi. It took three years (1717–1720) to complete the first block print of the Mongolian *Kanjur*. 43687 *lang* and 9 *qin*⁵⁶ of silver were invested in carving the block print. The leading translators responsible for the editorial work were the First Ruling Lama of Dolon-nuur Monastery, Shiregetü Noyan Chorji, Da Lama Kanjurwa Chulkrims (Tib. Tshul khirms), Sönid Beile (Prince of the Third Rank) Shiri, and Abaga Güng (Prince of the Second Rank) Demchüg. Other important people who participated in this work were Tüguan Khutuǵtu, Jasaǵ (Governing) Lama Danzan, Ğabju Shirabdarja (Shes rab dar rgyas), Yangjirchi (dbyangs 'chirchi)⁵⁷ Lama Biligündalai,

⁵⁵ The 20 volumes (about 5000 pages) of the *Golden Kanjur* held in the Library of the Inner Mongolian Social Academy are considered to be a remnant of the version made in Ligdan Khan's time. This was brought from the Temple of Mahākāla (Mon. *Magad ilaǵuǵsan süm-e*) in Mūgden (present Shen Yang) by someone called Jodba in 1957. When Mongols joined the Manchu court, this *Golden Kanjur* and the other two state emblems of Ligden Khan, the Jade Seal and Golden Makākāla (handed down from the Yuan) were brought to the Manchu Emperor, and the *Kanjur* was placed in the Temple of Makākāla in Mūgden in 1636. Several copies of ink manuscripts related to the *Golden Kanjur* have been found.

⁵⁶ One *lang* (Chi. *liang*) equals 50g and one *qin* (Chi. *qian*) equals 5g.

⁵⁷ The specifics of this title are unknown as there is no other record of it. According to Möngke, the First Panchen Lama had this title because of his successful evocation of Yamāntaka.

Lonsangchering (Blo bzang tshe ring), Danzanchoidar (Tib. Dan 'dzin chos dar) and official Abida (Bulag 2003: 675–679) .

After the Kanjur had been printed, the process of translation and making block prints of the *Tanjur* started. The table of contents of the Beijing version of the Tibetan *Tanjur* and the old table of contents compiled by the Fifth Dalai Lama were translated into Mongolian before the real translation work began. The decision to translate *Tanjur* was taken in the spring of 1741 and scholars from Inner and Outer Mongolia as well as Tibet, the high lamas of the monasteries in Beijing, and teachers of the Tibetan Language School in Beijing were recruited to form a translating team. The Third Jangjia Khutuḡtu Rolbidorji (Lcang skya ho thog thu Rol pa'i rdo rje, also known as Ye shes bstan pa'i sgron me, 1717–1786) and Ḡaldan Shiregetü Lobsangdambinima (Dga'-ldan shi-re-thu Blo bzang bstan pa'i nyi ma, 1689 –1762) took charge of the team. In preparation for the project, Jangjia Khutuḡtu drafted and Abaḡa Dai Güng Aḡwangdampil (Ngag dbang bstan 'phel) edited a lexicon entitled *Dag yig mkhas pa' 'byung gnas* (*Lexicon (entitled): The Mine for the Wise* in Tibetan. Then about forty scholars, including Üjümüchin Güng Gombujab (Mgon po skyabs), Sünid Gelong Danzanchoidar (Bstan 'dzin chos dar), Urlad Güüshi Biligündalai, Jarud Shiregetü Ülemjibiligtü, Erdeni Güüshi Chojjamsu (Chos ryga mtsho), Darma Güüshi, and Höhhot Erdeni Darkhan Güüshi Dambajamsu (Dam ba rgya mtsho), as well as Tibetan astrologist Sechen Rabjamba Blo bzang sangs rgyas, linguist (*Dagun-u Ukhagantan*) Mergen Rabjamba Shes rab bstan 'dzin and physiologist (*Tejigeküi Ukhagantan*) 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan revised and translated the lexicon into Mongolian and made a block print of the Tibetan-Mongolian technical dictionary *Dag yig mkhas pa' 'byung gnas, Merged garkhu-yin orun neretü toḡtaḡaḡsan dagyig* in 1741–1742. This was a Buddhist terminological dictionary which was specifically prepared for the Mongolian translation of the *Tanjur*. Mongol scholars, with the consultation of Tibetan scholars, worked on the translation between 1742 and 1749. The Mongolian *Tanjur* was printed in red ink in Beijing in 1749. This is called the Beijing Red Ink Mongolian Edition of the *Tanjur*. This edition is comprised of 1,800,000 pages in 226 volumes, including one volume of contents. It is divided into commentaries on sūtra and tantra, altogether 3500 texts. It also includes previous translations from the 14th–17th centuries. The Mongolian *Kanjur* and *Tanjur* are 333 volumes together; they are sometimes called *The Three*

Hundred and Thirty Three. In all, the combined works contains about a hundred million words (Bulaḡ 2003: 679–684).

The scholars, who participated in the translation and printing of the *Kanjur* and *Tanjur*, also compiled dictionaries, recorded their experiences about the translation, and wrote theories of translation. For example, Gombujab and Biligündalai compiled a Tibetan-Mongolian dictionary entitled *Tübed kele kilbar surkhu neretü bichig* (*Easy Learning Book for Tibetan*) that aimed to contribute to the translation of the *Tanjur* published in 1737. Valuable remarks on translation technique were included in the preface to the lexicon *Dag yig mkhas pa* 'byung gnas, *Merged garkhu-yin orun neretü toḡtagaḡsan daḡyig*. Such an extensive programme of translation indicates the intentional Mongolisation of Buddhism. These translated canons were in high demand for monastic education. It is evident that through translation, Mongols creatively produced an enormous amount of works (Richinkawa 1986: 47–102).

Works written in Tibetan

Although ordinary monks memorised the scriptures in Tibetan without understanding them, advanced-level monks did understand the texts they used in their ritual practises. In addition, many Mongol monks wrote books on all the subjects of Buddhist studies in Tibetan which were published in Mongolia and Tibet. Some of these scholars even surpassed their Tibetan colleagues and became well-known in both Mongolia and Tibet, and continue to be valued by the international community of contemporary academics who specialise in Buddhism. Among them are Alashan Lharampa Aḡwangdandar (A lag sha lha rams pa Ngag dbang bstan dar (1759–1831), Sumbe Khanpo Ishibaljur (Sum pa mkhan po ye shes dpal 'byor) and Naiman Toyin Jambaldorji (Tho yon 'Jam dpal rdo rje, 1792–1855) who until recently were identified as Tibetan scholars by western academics.⁵⁸ At present, studies of the works of Mongol monks who wrote in Tibetan are starting to draw the attention of both local and western scholars. I will present Mongol Buddhist scholars' writings in Tibetan based on the available surveys to date.

⁵⁸ Famous Mongol monks were often distinguished by names of the place from where they were from. A lag sha is a Tibetan rendering of the Mongolian Alasha, which is a league in western Inner Mongolia. As Aḡwangdandar was from Alasha he was called 'A lag sha ngag dbang bstan dar' or 'A lag sha lha rams pa'. Jambaldorji was from the Naiman aristocratic family, so he was called Tho yon (Mongolian *Toyin* refers to a monk with noble origin) 'Jam dpal rdo rje or Naiman Toyin Jambaldorji.

While 1959 survey suggests that there have been 208 Mongol Buddhist scholars who wrote in Tibetan, producing about 452 volumes, Byambaa Ragchaa estimates the number of the Mongolian Buddhist writers who wrote in Tibetan and translated from Tibetan at 500 scholars (Byambaa 2003: 21). Their works cover all major and minor subjects within Buddhist studies. Among the works of over 200 authors which are listed in the *Catalogue of Old Tibetan Books*, about one third is by Mongol monks.⁵⁹ Some of the most famous are Blo bzang bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan (1639–1704), whose collected works include seventy-nine works in four volumes; Dzaya Pandita Blo bzang 'phrin las (1642–1715), thirty-seven works in six volumes; Shi re thu blo bzang bstan pa'i nyi ma, 1689–1762), seventy-seven works in four volumes; Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor (1704–1786), seventy-one works in eight volumes; Lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje (1717–1786), 205 works in seven volumes; Chakhar dge bshe Blo bzang tshul khribs (1740–1810), 222 works in ten volumes; A lag sha lha rams pa Ngag dbang bstan dar (1758–1840), thirty-seven works in 2 volumes; Lcang lung Pandita Ngag dbang blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1770–1845), 126 works in Five volumes; Duingkhor Gegen Rgya nag dpal sangs 'jam Dbyangs bstan pa'i nyi ma (1806–1858), thirty-four works in three volumes; and Bishireltü Pandita Tshe 'phel dbang phyug rdo rje (1836–1894), fifty-seven works in one volume (Lobsang and Ürüntuyag-a 1998). The production of so many works in Tibetan by Mongol monks resulted from the above described socio-political and religious condition of Mongolia. This is manifested in three ways.

Firstly, the socio-political rule of Manchus over Mongols ensured that the Mongols remained peaceful but did not allow them to participate in disciplines or professions which required literacy⁶⁰, military training, or trading. Pursuit of high scholarship in Buddhism was the only means of employment for talented and ambitious Mongol men.

Secondly, Tibetan dominance encouraged Mongol monks to master Tibetan. The writings of Mongol monks in Tibetan covered general subjects such as Tibetan language

⁵⁹ This information is obtained through my personal communication with Dr. Erdenibayar who was the first contemporary Mongol scholar from Inner Mongolia to study Tibetan language and Tibetan Buddhism in Lhasa after the Cultural Revolution. He teaches Tibetan and Buddhism in Inner Mongolia University. In recent years he has been investigating and collecting the works written in Tibetan by Mongol monks.

⁶⁰ Manchu rulers adopted the old Chinese examination system for Chinese people to take all kinds of official posts. However, they prohibited Mongols from taking the examination. Mongol official posts were inherited through noble lines.

and grammar, Buddhist philosophy and epistemology, medicine, astrology, art and crafts, literature, rhetoric, music and drama ranging within the scope of Indo-Tibetan scholastic discourse.

Thirdly, Gelukpa Buddhism itself is a highly scholastic system that encourages monks to be open-minded and creative. Under Gelukpa-dominant Buddhism in Mongolia, the academic degrees obtained through the study of Buddhist philosophy and methods of debate became an accessible means for Mongols to pursue higher achievement. After completing their degrees, they often went back to their homeland and continued their studies as monks. Therefore Buddhist philosophy was highly developed everywhere in Mongolia. A popular saying goes: 'Every valley has a *choira* (Tib. *chos ra*, debate courtyard) and every family has a *geshi* (Tib. *dge bshes*, academic degree).' Most of the works written in Tibetan by Mongols are on Buddhist philosophy and logic because this was the only way for Mongols to show their full potential in contrast to the value of military glory in the past.

In order to give an impression of the Mongol monks' Tibetan writings, I will briefly introduce one of its most distinguished scholars: Alasha Lharampa. (a lag sha lha rams pa) ngag dbang bstan dar.

Alasha Lharampa Agwangdandar (A lag sha lha rams pa) Ngag dbang bstan dar (1758– 1840), also called Dandar Lharampa, was born into a herdsman's family in Alasha East Banner. He initially entered the banner monastery, where he studied Tibetan epistemological debate in the *Mtshan nyid grwa tshang* (Department of Philosophy). In 1776, when he was nineteen years old, he went to Drepung Monastery in Lhasa and studied in the Gomang *grwa tshang* (department). His principal teacher was Klong rdol ngag dbang blo bzang. After completing his curriculum in five major subjects: Perfection of Wisdom (*Prajñāpāramitā*), the Middle View (*Mādyamika*), Valid Cognition (*Pramana*), Discipline (*Vinaya*) and Knowledge (Abhidharma), He earned a Geshe Lharampa degree (the highest degree) through debating during the Great Prayer Festival (*Smon lam chen mo*) in Lhasa and was acclaimed as Monlam Lharampa. He also learnt poetry and grammar. He received many initiations, oral transmissions, quintessential instructions from great masters such as Yongs 'dzin dga' chen ye shes-rgyal mtshan, teacher of the Eighth Dalai Lama 'Jam dpal rgya mtsho. After twenty-four years of study, he became a great scholar, especially in philosophy, linguistics and poetry, and then returned to his homeland. After eight years of study and writing in his

original monastery, he went to Labrang in Tibet to further study poetry (Mon. *jokistu ayalgu*, Tib. *snyan ngag*). He wrote thirty-seven works in Tibetan, among which fourteen are on Buddhist philosophy and logic, six on the stages of the path to enlightenment (Tib. *lam rim*), five on poetry, five on linguistics and three commentaries on other subjects. Apart from his Tibetan works, Agwangdandar also wrote in Mongolian (Choimbul 1999: 25–34).

Agwangdandar studied the works of early Indian logicians such as Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. Particularly, his work on *Samtānātarasiddhināmaprakaraṇa* (*Proof of Others' Continuums*) by Dharmakīrti was recognised by the famous Russian scholar F.I. Stcherbatsky as the first commentary on the most essential question of epistemology and logic, more than 1000 years after its appearance (Öljei 1997). Among Agwangdandar's 14 independent works on Buddhist logic, *Rtags rigs kyi dka' ba'i gnas la phan pa'i zin bris gsar bshad nyi ma'i 'od zer* (The new exposition called sunshine which is a helpful note on the difficult points on syllogism). In many of his works, Agwangdandar criticises and creatively develops some early ideas of Indian Buddhist thought. He writes, 'I have presented this logic in order to strengthen and sharpen the young people's mind and wisdom even if this kind of teaching is prohibited in Abhidharma' (Öljei 1997: 270). In his commentary on Dharmakīrti's work '*Pramāṇavarttika*', Agwangdandar studies the logical method of cognition and remarks that the analysis of mind is the way to conceive hidden phenomena to understand the development of a concept, and the way to go to *nirvāṇa*. His works are still available in both Tibetan and Mongolian.

Writings in Tibetan by Mongols are numerous and of a high standard. However, there is not much 'Mongolness' to be seen in these works. We do not know how much the Mongol way of thinking or seeing the world contributed to their achievements. The distinctiveness of Mongolian Buddhism is more easily found in Mongols' writings in Mongolian.

Works written in Mongolian

In addition to translating Buddhist scriptures, Mongol monks wrote original works in Mongolian. I will divide Buddhist literature written by Mongols into three categories in terms of the language used by the authors: those who wrote mainly in Tibetan but also produced a small number of texts in Mongolian; those who wrote equal amount in

Tibetan and Mongolian; and those who wrote only in Mongolian. The second category is the largest; most people wrote both in Tibetan and Mongolian.

Works in Mongolian tend to shift away from general Buddhist discourse towards more practical dimensions. Mongolian works by the scholars in the first category are limited to only a few subjects, such as textbooks for learning the Mongolian script, Mongolian grammar and Tibetan-Mongolian dictionaries. It seems that such scholars came to realise the importance of improving Mongolian literacy. For example Ağwangdandar wrote a Mongolian grammar called *Monggul üsüg-ün yosun-i saidur nomlaḡsan kelen-ü chimeḡ* (Ornament of language that illustrates well the rules of Mongolian script) and a Tibetan-Mongolian dictionary entitled *Dag yig ming don gsal bar byed pa'i zla ba'i 'od snang* (Mon. *Nere udkha-yi todudkhaḡchi saran-u gegen gerel kemegdekü dokiyan-u bichig*). Although these are not Buddhist works, they aim to encourage the use of Mongolian language and script in Buddhism.

Works in Mongolian by the authors in the second category tend to be more complex in terms of their subjects. Chakhar Gebshi (*geshe*) Lobsangchültüm (Cha har dge bshes Blo bzang tshul khriḡs, 1740–1810) is a typical example. He was born in Köbeḡetü Chaghan Khoshigü (Bordered White Banner) of Chakhar⁶¹, Inner Mongolia, learnt to read and write Mongolian when he was seven years old and then learnt Tibetan. He studied sūtra and tantra extensively with many high lamas in Dolon-nuur Monastery and Yong He Gong monastery in Beijing (Ochi 1996: 13–36). He produced many works in both Tibetan and Mongolian. 215 of his works were collected into ten volumes of *sümbiüm* (Tib. *gsung 'bum*). According to his biography, the works that were not included in his collected works make up two volumes (Ochi 1996: 61). His works cover a wide range of subjects such as Buddhist philosophy, tantra, Stages of the Path, medicine, astrology, didactic poetry, history, monastic regulations, liturgies, biographies, commentaries, and translations. His Mongolian works include *Bogda Tsongkhapa-yin gegen-ü yeke namtar sain amuḡulang büküḡ-ü ḡarkhu-yin orun* (The field from which good tranquillity emerges, an extensive biography of the brightness of the holy

⁶¹ Chakhar is the name of the people who were ruled by the last independent Mongol emperors in the 16th–17th centuries. After submission to Manchu rule, Chakhar Mongols were tightly controlled by the Manchu Qing and were organised under the Manchu military Eight Banner system, named according to the colours of their banners (plain yellow, bordered yellow, plain white, bordered white etc.). The Eight Chakhar Banners were directly controlled by Li Fan Yuan unlike the other autonomous Mongol banners they were not ruled by hereditary rulers (*jasag*s), descended from Chinggis Khan

Tsongkhapa), History and monastic regulations entitled *Erdeni Töshi-yin süm-e-yin köke debter* (The blue annals of Erdeni Töshi Monastery), *Sukavadi-yin orun-u namtar* (History of Sukhavati) and many prayers. He also wrote a great number of didactic poems in Mongolian⁶², as well as popular ritual texts. *Rje tsong kha pa'i rnam thar chen mo* (The extensive biography of Tsongkhapa), and a text about the harm of smoking tobacco were written in both Mongolian and Tibetan (Ochi 1996; Lobsang and Ürüntuyağ-a 1998; Cheringsodnam 2001: 165–194).

Even if such author's works cover a wide range of subjects, most of them are practically-oriented, such as popular knowledge of Buddhism, Buddhist cosmology, Buddhist ethics, biographies, and the introduction of specific deities and their spells. In this sense, they are didactic rather than academic and are written for a more general and public audience. One special aspect of the works of this category of authors is liturgical texts for local rituals. Sometimes such authors wrote one text simultaneously in both languages or wrote in one language and then translated it into the other language for themselves. Such works are either academic or popular.

Not many authors who wrote exclusively in Mongolian are known to us. Based on the available materials, Mergen Gegen Lobsangdambijaltsan (Blo sang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan), Noyan Khutuḡtu Danzanrabjai (Danzanravjaa in Mongolia)⁶³ and Nomtu-yin Rinchin are the most fruitful figures for their writing in Mongolian (Cheringsodnam 2001: 157–220). As my focus is on Mergen Gegen's works and his tradition of Buddhist practices in Mongolian, this study will illustrate the general features of the writings of Mongolian monks who wrote only in Mongolian.

⁶² On didactic poetry, see Chapter 7.

⁶³ Although Noyan Khutuḡtu Danzanrabjai is known to have written both Mongolian and Tibetan, I take him into this category because his Mongolian works are the most important contribution to Mongolian Buddhism and literature.

CHAPTER 3. Neichi Toyin's Mongolian Line of Buddhist Practices

In the early period of the second conversion, those Tibetan lamas such as Mañjuśrī Khutugtu, Shiregetü Güüshi Chorji, and Maidar (Maitreya) Khutugtu, who had been sent to Mongolia officially, had close connections with the relatively independent Mongol rulers and helped them to establish the Tibetan line of Buddhist practices. Later, the successors and reincarnations of these lamas and the leading monasteries, such as Yeke Juu and Shiregetü Juu monasteries in Höhhot, became the basis of the Manchu-controlled Tibetan line of Buddhist practices in Mongolia.

However, there was great diversity in Buddhist practices in Mongolia under the umbrella of the 'Gelukpa School,' especially on local level, partly because of the inclusive nature of Gelukpa Buddhism. Tucci, for instance, remarks 'Tsongkhapa owed his doctrinal and spiritual training to visits to the most famous masters of his time, without any sort of prejudice with respect to their school' (1980: 43). Moreover, Gelukpa School shared doctrinal and spiritual elements with other schools as Samuel notes: 'Perhaps the most useful perspective on Tsongkhapa is to regard him as the creator of the most influential of all Tibetan syntheses between Sūtra and Tantra practices' (1993: 507). Later Gelukpa masters such as the Dalai Lama have often taken masters of other schools as their teachers for certain practices. For example, 'The 5th Dalai Lama was not a narrow-minded proponent of Gelukpa doctrinal supremacy. His own family had close ties with the Nyingmapa, Jonangpa, and Kagyüpa, and he had studied Nyingmapa and Dzogchen teachings, as had his teacher, the 1st Panch'en Rimpoche' (Samuel 1993: 528). As a result, some deities were major figures in more than one school, and deities such as Padmasambhava and Mahākala were highly venerated in Gelukpa practices in Mongolia. Moreover, some other schools were practised in Mongolia: for example, Aḡui-yin Süm-e in Bayan-nuur League, Inner Mongolia, and Noyon Khutugtu lineage in Outer Mongolia fall under the Nyingmapa School (Chiaoji 1994: 75; Charleaux 2002).

There were many *diyanchi* lamas who meditated in mountain caves or other solitary places. For instance, Boḡda Chaḡan Lama, Chaḡan Diyanchi, Chakhar Diyanchi, Erdeni Diyanchi, Arigun Mergen Diyanchi and Mergen Diyanchi meditated near the mountain in Höhhot and Chaḡan Diyanchi and Tabun Diyanchi in Mongḡuljin in eastern Mongolia. There has been a lack of study of such lamas. We only know about certain

famous *diyanchi* lamas, but we do not know how many existed altogether. There are many caves called 'lama's cave' or 'hermit cave', but there are no records on the actual meditators who lived there. This might be due to two reasons. Firstly, such lamas usually wanted to hide away from people and society. Only when they came back to play a role in society did they became known. Secondly, it was usually the major monasteries who kept records of influential clergy who became famous. However, a sign of the popularity of such lamas or their practices is that there are many monasteries called *keid*.⁶⁴ Pozdneyev came across a *keid* with eighteen hermit yurts for such lamas in Chakhar in Inner Mongolia in 1878. According to his description, these lamas belonged to the Gelukpa School because they went to do contemplation 'after having studied the higher dogma of Buddhism in *tsanid*⁶⁵ schools' (Pozdneyev 1978: 278–314).

Evidence suggests that this type of practice did not get much encouragement within Manchu controlled Gelukpa Buddhism in Mongolia, even though it was an important component of that school. Instead, they were gradually incorporated into the institutionalised monastic order. Monasteries were built at the meditation site of the above mentioned Diyanchis. For example, Usutu Juu Monastery was built at the meditation site of Chakhar Diyanchi. Lama-yin Agui Juu (Lama's Cave Monastery) was built at the meditation site of Bogda Chagan Lama. Monggöljin Gegen Süm-e, an eastern Mongolian monastery well known as Eastern Juu (Eastern Lhasa) was built by another Chagan Diyanchi in eastern Mongolia. These practices contributed to the diversity of Mongolian Buddhism.

The main focus of this thesis, the Mergen Tradition, originated from the *diyanchi* lama Neichi Toyin. There were two Mongolian missionaries who tried to disseminate

⁶⁴ A number of Mongolian words are used for 'monastery' including *keid*, *süm-e*, *juu*, *küriy-e* and *datsang*. *Keid* is the earliest name. It came from Central Asia and originally referred to a hermitage. *Juu* derives from the Tibetan *joko* and refers to a statue of Śākyamuni Buddha that was brought to Tibet by the Chinese princess Wen Cheng when she married Srong btsan sgam po in 641CE. Because of that Mongols gradually came to call the temples or monasteries that contain the statue of the image of the Buddha *juu*; even Lhasa was called *juu*. So Tibet was called 'land of *juu*' (Mon. *juu-yin orun*). Uses of *Juu* seems to have started from building Yeke Juu at the time of Altan Khan, and the officially built monasteries in and around Höhhot were mostly called *juu*, e.g. Bağa juu, Shiregetü juu, Maidari juu, Usutu juu. Similarly, *süm-e* derived from Tibetan numerical word *gsum* for three, and refers to a monastery because it is a place that contains the three jewels: the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. *Süm-e* seems to have become most popular later. Now *süm-e* and *keid* are combined together as *süm-e keid* for monasteries. *Küriy-e* literally means 'enclosure' or 'encircling camp.' It was used for the monasteries in Khalkha and only a case in eastern Inner Mongolia. It might have come from the fact that Mongolian monasteries there and then were composed of numerous yurts camped in a circle. *Datsang* is used in Buryatia following Tibetan *grwa tshang* meaning monastic college.

⁶⁵ *Tsanid* is Mongolian version of Tibetan *mtshan nyid* meaning philosophy.

Buddhism in the Mongolian language: Dzaya Pandita and Neichi Toyin. Although they belonged to the same Gelukpa tradition, Dzaya Pandita and Neichi Toyin represented two different tendencies. While Dzaya Pandita was a scholastic monk who built monasteries and translated scriptures, Neichi Toyin was a tantric master, who spread tantrism widely among lay people in Mongolian. The Mergen Tradition has consistently recognised and venerated Neichi Toyin as the founder of its lineage.

1. Neichi Toyin's initiation of Mongolian Line of Buddhist practices

Since Buddhism in most of Mongolia was under the dominance of the Tibetan line of practices, the Mongol monk Neichi Toyin deliberately chose eastern Inner Mongolia to disseminate Buddhism because shamanism was still dominant there at his time.

Neichi Toyin initiated a Mongolian line of Buddhist practices in this region which I call the Neichi Toyin Line.⁶⁶ It can be viewed in two ways. On the one hand, the Neichi Toyin Line is one of many diverse local practices of Buddhism in Mongolia; especially in the early stage of Buddhist conversion before the Manchu designed Tibetan Buddhist authority had been established. Oirat Dzaya Pandita is another example of how initiators undertook missionary activities that fitted local conditions in the early stages of conversion. On the other hand, the Neichi Toyin Line is a unique in terms of its influence. Neichi Toyin is well-known among the scholars of the history of Mongolian Buddhism because of his missionary work in eastern Inner Mongolia, particularly in relation to the Buddhist suppression of shamanism. However, his effort in establishing Buddhist practices in Mongolian has not been widely recognised. Even the biography of Neichi Toyin does not specifically evaluate his use of Mongolian, perhaps because it was written in the established environment of Manchu-controlled Tibetan domination over the Mongolian Buddhist system.

My main source of information about Neichi Toyin comes from his biography *Bogda Neichi Toyin Dalai Manjushiri-yin domug-i todurkhai-a geigülügchi chindamani*, (Rosary of wishing-granting gems that clearly illuminates the biography of Holy Neichi Toyin Dalai Mañjuśrī', hereafter, *DCH*) written by Prajñā Sāgara and printed in Beijing in 1739. Heissig made a comprehensive study of this biography in his paper titled 'A

⁶⁶ My use of this title refers to the practice initiated by the First Neichi Toyin that used Mongolian in Buddhist practice. It is important to note that the use of 'line' in these case not only signifies the language and ways of Buddhist practice, but also all the monastic and lay individuals and communities involved.

Mongolian source to the Lamaist Suppression of Shamanism in the 17th Century.'

Heissig rightly notes that Neichi Toyin's biography that of a simple monk is an exception among a few biographies in Mongolian that were printed xylographs in Beijing. He further remarks that neither a Mongolian edition of this work nor any Tibetan companion piece is known. The few other biographical works in Mongolian were about high ranking church dignitaries, *personae gratae* within the Manchu court. In this light, Heissig concludes: 'this biography composed in Mongolian, testifies to the high esteem in which this monk was still held by the eastern Mongols at the time of its compilation. Its having been printed in Beijing indicates how highly the achievements of Neichi Toyin in the final conversion of the easternmost Mongols were regarded by the Lamaist Church as well as by the Manchu government' (Heissig 1953: 67).

Heissig's comments are weakened by his inability to identify the author of the text. Prajñā Sāgara (Biligündalai) was not a Khorchin as he supposed but an Urad Mongol.⁶⁷ The connection of Urad Mongols and the Mergen Tradition to Neichi Toyin explains why this ordinary monk's biography was written and printed in Beijing. As Prajñā Sāgara will be discussed later, I will only briefly present the information about him which is relevant here.

Prajñā Sāgara was born in Urad Right Duke Banner and was a disciple of Lobon Chorji Ögligündalai, the First Chorji Lama of Mergen Monastery. He was in charge of the Yamāntaka Temple in Beijing, having been appointed to that position by the Second Neichi Toyin. The temple was granted to the Second Neichi Toyin by the Kangxi Emperor in 1693. Interestingly, all the rituals and services of this monastery were conducted entirely in Mongolian from the start and most of the twenty monks headed by the Da Lama were from the various monasteries of Urad Right Duke Banner (Möngke 2000: 92). Prajñā Sāgara became the general manager of the imperial block printing house in Jing Zhu Si, and was one of the main participants in the compilation of the new translation of Mongolian *Kanjur* in Beijing. He taught Mongolian to the crown prince

⁶⁷ Heissig thoroughly investigated all the people named or titled Prajñā Sāgara in connection with Neichi Toyin, but denied the well-known scholar called Urad-un Biligündalai simply assuming 'Because this scholar never used the Sanskrit form of his name viz. *Prajñā Sāgara*' (Heissig 1953: 69). In addition, Heissig did not trace the possibility of Urad-un Biligündalai perhaps because he only paid attention to the Khorchin Mongols who were the devoted followers of Neichi Toyin, but ignored or did not realise the connection between Neichi Toyin and Mergen Monastery or Urad Right Duke Banner from where Prajñā Sāgara originated. According to some materials, the only Biligündalai who used the Sanskrit form of his name Prajñā Sāgara or Prajñā Samudra to differentiate himself from other numerous Biligündalas at that time was exactly the distinguished scholar Urad Güüshi Biligündalai (Möngke 1999, 65–88).

(later emperor Qianlong) and the Third Jangjia Khutuḡtu Rolbidorji. Prajñā Sāgara became very accomplished and famous in the 18th century and received great favour from the Kangxi Emperor. As a result of his connection with Neichi Toyin and Mergen Monastery, Prajñā Sāgara wrote Neichi Toyin's biography. Because of his special status in Buddhist circles in Beijing and the Manchu court, he was able to get the biography published.

Neichi Toyin's father, Mergen Tebene, was a noble of Torgud, the westernmost of the Oirat Mongols, who had ten thousand soldiers in 1557. Neichi Toyin's original name was Abida. Abida decided that he wanted to renounce the world. His parents did not agree and gave him a wife in order to keep him at home. Later, Abida had a son. Still, Abida did not change his mind, so his parents posted guards to prevent him from leaving home. According to his biography, he once was reading a book outside under the guards' attendance. A leaf of his book was caught by the wind and he chased after it, thereby escaping the guards. He arrived at Tashilumpo Monastery in Tibet when he was about twenty-eight or twenty-nine (1585) where he became a disciple of the Fourth Panchen Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, and received vows up to *usumbad* (*gelong*) and was given the name Shaḡshabad (Tib. Tshul Khrim, Skt. Śīla). He also gained expertise in sūtras and tantras and received many initiations and *ubadis* (Skt. *upadeśa*) from the Panchen Lama. Neichi Toyin learnt sūtras and received tantra initiations and consecrations from many accomplished lamas. As his nickname was Neichi he was known as Neichi Toyin.⁶⁸

His mission was to spread Buddhism in the East. When he asked permission to do meditation in a solitary place, the Panchen Lama told him that his destination was to spread Buddhism in the east. Therefore, it would be greatly beneficial for religion and living beings if he went to the east. The Panchen Lama told him that it was like an analogy of the wise noble man who returned to his homeland to eliminate the suffering of poverty after having found all kind of wish fulfilling jewels (Mon. *chindamani*, Skt. *Cintamāṇi*).

Neichi Toyin went to Khalkha Mongolia and then to Höhhot. However, Tibetan missionary lamas had already taken control of Khalkha and Höhhot and this may have deterred him from staying there, as an incident in his biography suggests. He attended a

⁶⁸ There has been no convincing explanation about the meaning of *Neichi*. *Toyin* refers to a monk of noble origin.

service in Yeke Juu in Höhhot, and when he was reading text for Yamāntaka, the monastic disciplinarian (*gebküi*, Tib. *Dge skos*) told him that he was not reading a Buddhist chant. Neichi Toyin countered this by saying that the chant he was chanting was not a chant for them and went out. This implies that either there was no Yamāntaka practice in Mongolia or that he chanted in Mongolian while others were chanting in Tibetan.

After that, he wandered about the Höhhot area, meeting accomplished lamas such as Sa chos rji⁶⁹, Boḡda Chaḡan Lama⁷⁰ and Arigun Mergen Diyanchi, all of whom showed him great respect. They were hermits and seemed to be peripheral to the mainstream Tibetan mission of Buddhism in the Höhhot area. The biography does not give a clear reason for his journey further eastward. He gained the veneration of the Höhhot local ruler Ombu Khong Taiji⁷¹ by performing a ritual that successfully brought rain when other famous lamas had failed. However, there was no opportunity for him to gain a position in the Buddhist circle. The biography states that Ayushi Güüshi⁷² was jealous of him and refused Neichi Toyin's visit. When Neichi Toyin's disciple told him of Ayushi Güüshi's rude refusal, the donkey he was riding on brayed loudly three times towards the east. From this Ayushi Güüshi assumed that Neichi Toyin was the lama who would spread religion in the East.

After spending thirty-five years meditating on the mountain north of Höhhot, Neichi Toyin gained many disciples. He had meditated on Guhyasamāja for two sessions a day, and Vajrabhairava with Thirteen Retinues for two sessions a night, and at the end of the fourth session of yoga practice, he would concentrate on the maṇḍala and ask, 'If you are Vajradhara Yamāntaka, please do not let me succumb to the power of the Emperor' (*DCH*: 123).

He set out to go eastwards with his disciples. He decided that it was time to realise the wishes (*irügel*)⁷³ of the monks and lay people in the east for many lifetimes.

⁶⁹ No other information about this lama is known.

⁷⁰ The Chaḡan Lama Rashijamsu, a famous preacher and hermit of unknown origin who came during the time of Ming Emperor Wanli (万历 1571–1620) to the mountains 80 li west of Höhhot. He died in 1627 (Heissig, 1992, 77). He was a relative of one of the officials of Altan Khan and he became the follower of the Kagyü School of Buddhism. He met Neichi Toyin sometime between 1619 and 1630 (Wakamazi Hiroshi, 1985: 70).

⁷¹ He was Altan Khan's grandson.

⁷² This is quite likely the famous translator Ayushi Güüshi, who created Aliḡali script and who led the translation of the *Kanjur*.

⁷³ Mongolian *irügel* is a strong wish, more like a vow. It is believed that any such *irügel* must be fulfilled without fail.

When a container of his tilted, spilling milk eastwards, it was considered to be an omen. The further he went, the stronger his conviction became, because he considered many omens to be favourable. Neichi Toyin intended to do his missionary work among the eastern Mongols. Therefore, he declined the Manchu emperor's request to become his priest and reside in the palace (*DCH*: 138). He refused to give consecration to the prince and princess of Chakhar who were descendents of Chinggis Khan, the golden lineage. However, the first people he converted were all princes and princesses in Khorchin and neighbouring banners.⁷⁴ It is clear that Neichi Toyin intended to neither serve the ruler nor seek high office, which is unique in the history of Mongolian Buddhism.

His accomplishment in Tantrism, such as Yamāntaka and Guhyasamāja tantras provided him with an extremely effective means of converting people. His first major encounter was with the powerful Khobuḡtu Böge (shaman) who was of noble origin. Conversion of the shaman and healing the princess of Ongniḡud Banner gained him great renown. His continuous healing of diseases, infertility, and conversion of shamans, helped him to gain respect from a wide range of people from princes to ordinary people. His next step of work and the main task of him were to preach Buddhist doctrine and gave initiations. By this he converted more and more people and gained more and more disciples. Throughout, he insisted on preaching in Mongolian and extensively taught Tantric formulas. At first, Neichi Toyin's disciples asked him why he taught the secret dharma to anyone, while he had asked them not to reveal it to people who had not been initiated. To this, Neichi Toyin replied 'You are right. They are ordinary (*enggir*) people. Will they contain and realise the secret dharma at once when it was taught? I am stuffing [the secret dharma] into their ears in order to make them have the propensity (Mon. *abiyas*, Skt. *vasana*) for Buddhist belief in succeeding lifetimes' (*DCH*: 137). Neichi Toyin's legacy has had a lasting effect on the eastern Mongols.⁷⁵ This is possibly the

⁷⁴ It is interesting to note here that Khorchin nobles shared with Urad nobles the common ancestor Khasar, Chinggis Khan's younger brother, and both became close followers of Neichi Toyin. As for Neichi Toyin's origin among Torgud Mongols, they also had a strong connection with Khorchin Mongols in earlier times.

⁷⁵ For example, when the Ninth Panchen Lama fled to China (1924–1937), he was invited all over Inner Mongolia by the local nobles to give Kālacakra initiations. The first invitation came from Darkhan Qin Wang Namjilsereng of Khorchin, a descendent of the most important patron of Neichi Toyin. More than 170,000 Mongols attended The Panchen Lama's first Kālacakra initiation. Princes, dukes, aristocrats, monks and lay people from all over eastern Inner Mongolia made a crowd five kilometres deep around Tanggargan Monastery where the Panchen Lama conducted the ceremony (Wuyungaowa 1997: 201). This scene is a reminiscent of the religious zeal of the eastern Mongols three centuries earlier in Neichi

origin of the eastern Mongolian custom of *nom surkhu* (learning doctrine).⁷⁶ Neichi Toyin taught sūtra and tantra extensively. He taught mainly the Vajrabhairava Tantra and its many accompanying rituals such as 'retreat', 'maṇḍala', consecration (*rab gnas*) and throwing magic weapons (*zor*); from sūtra, he taught *Kanjur* and its commentary, 'discipline' (*vinaya*) and 'stages of the path' (*lamrim*), and gave quintessential instructions in the biographies of many root lamas of Gelukpa and Kadampa schools, such as Juu Atisha, Master Brom (Brom ston rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas) and Tsongkhapa (*DCH*: 181).

With reference to Neichi Toyin's use of Mongolian for teaching and practicing Buddhism, Arigundalai, the author of the biography of the Third Neichi Toyin, states, 'This holy lama said

Indian Buddhism spread widely in Tibet in their language but it spread from Tibet to some part of Mongolia not in their own language. Disseminating Buddhism in Tibetan was not effective for contemplating and meditating, and in addition, people with lower intelligence understand nothing. It is difficult for them to generate faith and realisation without understanding. Let me teach the doctrine in the language of gods and *nāgas*, *yakṣa*, *kumbhañḍhas* and humans, and the sounds of all the beings.' (Khurchabilig 1997: 267–268) 'The holy lama compiled in Mongolian, which was unprecedented, and disseminated the teachings and commentaries for reading and learning; guidance for listening and contemplating; quintessential instructions for meditation and realisation; rituals of maṇḍalas of the four tantras; two stages of the great path, and gratification and confession of the *dharmapālas*. He also made the tone of chanting harmonious; melodious or ferocious and regulated hand gestures, and even techniques of beating drums and gongs, familiarizing these to the deity of Yamāntaka, the Yama' (268–269).

Later authors, such as Mergen Gegen and Galdanwangchugdorji, also point out that Neichi Toyin disseminated Buddhism in Mongolian.

Toyin's time. Whereas Neichi Toyin taught the secret *dharma* to the ordinary people in order to give them the propensity to Buddhist belief in later lives, the aim of the 20th century Kālacakra initiation was for them faithful to be reborn in Shambala, the only pure land on earth, when the Panchen Lama is king there. In the 1970s, after the Cultural Revolution and the relaxation of religious policy in China, a wave of people sought audience with the Tenth Panchen Lama in Beijing for the same purpose. Receiving teaching from the two high lamas (Neichi Toyin and Panchen Lama) may be called taking karmic blessing. Perhaps because of Neichi Toyin's influence, this custom of taking karmic blessing is especially strong among the eastern Mongols. Ulaan Gegen, the highest contemporary lama of Inner Mongolia, who passed away a few years ago, commented that the Eastern Mongolian custom of taking blessings was strange because they brought all kinds of things — dairy products, fruit, drinks, scarves, hats, and even pens to be blessed.

⁷⁶ In the past, when a wandering monk requested overnight lodging from a lay household, the elders of the household often asked the monk to teach doctrine to them. 'Doctrine' (*nom*) in such cases was usually a Buddhist mantra or secret formula.

Neichi Toyin and his disciples were highly venerated by Khorchin, Kharachin, Tümed, Naiman, Ongnigud, Keshigten, Aukhan, Baġarin, Aru Khorchin, Dörbed, Jarud, Jalaid, and Gorlos Mongols, and chanting in Mongolian became very popular among them. After Neichi Toyin's arrival in eastern Inner Mongolia, many monasteries and temples were built, and the number of Buddhist disciples greatly increased. Neichi Toyin made a lot of images of the Buddhas, Bodhisattavas and Tsongkhapa. He bought paper and ink to have the Mongolian *Kanjur* hand-copied 108 copies, and built many stupas in gold and silver and distributed them to the princes, nobles, lamas, monks and all believers. These deeds are known as the establishment of the 'three objects of worship'.

Neichi Toyin's activities and success offended Shibjegüreg, who was sent by the Dalai Lama to the Manchu Court and who was appointed by the Manchu Emperor as head lama of Shiregetü Kūriye⁷⁷, and Emperor of Doctrine. Shibjegüreg accused Neichi Toyin of travelling in Mongolia as if he were a buddha and giving his disciples the names of buddhas and deities, for example, White Yamāntaka and White Vairocana. He said that Neichi Toyin had revealed the most profound and subtle secret doctrine, such as Vajrayāna Yamāntaka without distinguishing between superiors and inferiors, and even taught them to people who fetched water from wells and who collected dung and firewood. This echoed the Manchu Emperor's dislike of Neichi Toyin. The biography tells how Neichi Toyin had first refused to be the emperor's lama, then to hold a service to heal his illness, and finally to give him initiation. Neichi Toyin was perceived as a threat to Manchu policy towards Buddhism in Mongolia. The emperor sent this matter to the Fifth Dalai Lama who passed a resolution to send Neichi Toyin and his major

⁷⁷ As mentioned earlier, Ashing Lama convinced Altan Khan to invite the Third Dalai Lama for a meeting. At the meeting of the Dalai Lama and Altan Khan, the Ashing Lama was also conferred as Mañjuśrī Khutuġtu. After the conversion of the Tümed Mongols to Buddhism, Ashing Lama went eastward. On the way to the east, Neichi Toyin met him in Chakhar when he was doing meditation in a cave called Imaġatu. He gave the Neichi Toyin a handful of earth as an omen that the Neichi Toyin's followers would be numerous like the earth. The Mañjuśrī Khutuġtu went to the Manchu Emperor and, gaining the latter's favour, was bestowed a good land in eastern Inner Mongolia where he initiated the Mañjuśrī Kūriy-e. After his death, his brother Darkhan Nangsu was conferred upon the title *shiregetü darkhan chorji*, and succeeded the Ashing Lama position. After that, the monastery was called Shiregetü Kūriy-e and monks and lay people were recruited from the forty-nine banners of Inner Mongolia to be subjects of the monastery. The third abbot of this monastery, Shibjegüreg was sent by the Fifth Dalai lama and Fourth Panchen Lama to the Manchu Court to do missionary work and gained the great favour of the Manchu Rulers. After successful missionary work, he was bestowed the title *shiregetü* (chair) and ruling seal in 1646. Since then a new banner governed by the lama was created. This was the only lama banner or hierocratic banner in Inner Mongolia. This banner used to be central to the Manchu strategy of pacifying the Mongols via Buddhism.

disciples to Höhhot, to leave sixty of his disciples in Shibjegüreg's Shiregetü Küriye, and to give the rest of the disciples to Khorchin nobles as their lamas. Having been sent to Höhhot, Neichi Toyin lost his body of adherents in the East, and was placed in an environment which was dominated by the Tibetan line of Buddhist practices, which Neichi Toyin had already encountered and clashed with when he first visited the city several decades earlier.

Not long after Neichi Toyin arrived in Höhhot, he was invited back to eastern Inner Mongolia by the Emperor's messenger at the request of Lady Bingtū⁷⁸, who was his devoted follower. However, Neichi Toyin died in Ongnigud Banner before reaching Lady Bingtū in Darkhan Banner. The biography gives an interesting account about Neichi Toyin's inclination to reincarnate in eastern Inner Mongolia. When he stopped in Ongnigud Banner, he asked the ruling prince to pull out an aching tooth with a pincher. When the prince was not able to pull the tooth out, Neichi Toyin said to the prince in despair, 'I wanted to leave this tooth of mine here to symbolise my next rebirth here. I have to admit that I have no fortune to be born here.' This is a sign of Neichi Toyin's eagerness to continue his endeavour in the East. However, beyond his expectation, Mongolian line of Buddhism prospered among the Urad Mongols in western Inner Mongolia.

2. Expansion and influence of the Neichi Toyin Line

It is important to note that although the First Neichi Toyin is recognised as the founding lineage lama of the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism, the actual connection between Neichi Toyin's line and Mergen Tradition started with the Second Neichi Toyin. *Baragun Süm-e-yin da blama-yin gajar khadaḡalakhū shashin-i badaraguluḡchi, bayaskhulang-i khuriyagchi khoyar süm-e-yin uḡ eki-yin dangsa bichig* (Record of the origin of the two monasteries named Prospering Religion and Gathering Joy, which was kept in the Da Lama office of the West Monastery, hereafter, *DB*)⁷⁹ notes,

⁷⁸ Lady Bingtū was the grandmother of four wives of Emperor Shun Zhi. Two of them became queens.

⁷⁹ This is a chronicle of Mergen Monastery and West Monastery written by Galdanwangchugdorji (1801–1854), the fourteenth Ruling Imperial Duke of the First Degree of Urad Right Duke Banner. This material survived through the private collection of a local intellectual, Huasheng, and is now kept in the library of Inner Mongolia Normal University. Mōngke, a local scholar published it with his notes in 1994. However, Mōngke's edition is not complete. *DBA* is a missing part of *DB*. It is a manuscript bearing the same title as *DB* and is kept in the library of the *Inner Mongolia Daily* newspaper. Mōngke mistook the

Mergen Diyanchi Dinu-a was recognised as the finest of the thirty best close disciples of Boḡda Toyin Gegen. The archive kept in our government office records that when he was the ruling duke of the banner, Nomun⁸⁰, the Imperial Duke of First Degree requested the Neichi Toyin Khutuḡtu Lama send him a lama to worship. So his disciple Mergen Diyanchi Lama was appointed to be a lama to worship in the banner' (DB: 179).

Boḡda Toyin Gegen here refers to the First Neichi Toyin (1557–1653). However, Neichi Toyin Khutuḡtu Lama is, as Möngke rightly points out (Möngke 1995: 49), not the first but the Second Neichi Toyin (1671–1703) because Duke Nomun held the ruling Duke position between 1672 and 1683, which does not coincide with the lifetime of the First Neichi Toyin. Not only did the Neichi Toyin Line sustain its Mongolian practices until the communists took over but it also maintained a close connection with the Mergen Tradition.

The Second Neichi Toyin

The Second Neichi Toyin's biography has attracted limited attention from scholars. It is titled *Degedü Törülkitü boḡda gnas bcu toyin khutuḡtu wakisuwra sumadi ša sa na dhvaja sain choḡtu-yin chedig doluḡan erdeni tegüstügsen süsüg- ün jula kemegdekü orusiba* (Lamp of faith that is perfect with seven jewels, a biography of the holy Neichi Toyin Khutuḡtu Vacasvira Su-madhi šasana-a dhvaja, the glorious who had a high origin, hereafter, *CHJ*) by Dharma Samudra (Mon. Nomundalai) in 1756. According to Ġaldanwangchuḡdorji, Dharma Samudra was born in Urad Right Duke Banner and was the First Güüshi Da Baḡshi of Mergen Monastery. He was the disciple of the great scholar Ögligündalai who was the First Chorji Baḡshi of Mergen Monastery. He was called Güüshi Da Baḡshi because he was the Da Lama of a new subordinate monastery

date of compilation because he did not have access to *DBA*. He assumed it to be 1846. However, the colophon at the end of *DBA* gives two dates. It states 'This book in four volumes was started on the first of the first summer month of the 25th year of Törü Gereltü (Dao Guang, 1821–1850).' According to this calculation, it was started in 1845. However, the last sentence of the book reads 'It was written in the 24th year of Törü Gereltü, the dragon year.' This contradiction suggests that *DBA* was started in 1845, but the whole book was started in 1844, unless the author or copier made a mistake.

According to Ġaldanwangchuḡdorji, he wrote his book by referring to the old records of Mergen Monastery and that of the banner government, which were both in the form of thread bound books. Ġaldanwangchuḡdorji also stated that one copy of his book would be kept in the Lama's office and one copy in the government office. The material conveys detailed and rich information about the origin of the two monasteries and all the relevant events and people, as well as their internal and external relationships chronologically up to 1845.

⁸⁰ Duke Nomun was the fifth ruling duke of the Urad South Duke Banner. He inherited the status in 1672 and died in 1683.

of the Second Neichi Toyin. He was not only an accomplished Buddhist master, but also an expert on the translation of Buddhist text. He was chosen to participate in the translation of *Tanjur* in Beijing. He stayed in Khorchin Mongolia for some time in the place of his master Ögligündalai. At the request of the Khorchin nobles, the Jangjia Khutuḡtu bestowed on him the title 'Erdeni Sechen Chorji (Jewel Wise King of Dharma)' in 1744 (*DB*: 203–205). According to Möngke, the Khorchins built a special temple for Dharma Samudra in Bayan-khoshigu Monastery which was dedicated to the First Neichi Toyin. Therefore, the temple was called Güüshi Da Baḡshi's Branch Department and was directly managed by Mergen Monastery who sent representatives there until the communist take over. The last representative was called Shira-otkhun who went there in 1947 (Möngke 1994: 375–378).

According to the colophon of *CHJ*, Dharma Samudra wrote the biography because nobles and lamas of Khorchin and Urad requested him to do so. Therefore, he interviewed the disciples of the Second Neichi Toyin, who were still alive at that time. The main informants were Dharma Samudra's own root lama Vajradhara Dana Samudra (Ögligündalai), lineage lama Prajñā. In addition, the ruling lama Mgon bo of the Yamāntaka temple gave Dharma Samudra his own notes that contained what he saw, knew and heard about the Second Neichi Toyin. Thus, Dharma Samudra wrote the biography based on the notes and his interviews (*CHJ*: 246). The significant points here are as follows. Firstly, Dharma Samudra was born in Urad Right Duke Banner where Mergen Monastery was located and, more importantly, he was one of the seven reincarnations in the Mergen Monastery. Secondly, he took charge of the subordinate monastery of the Second Neichi Toyin when the latter was in old age. Thirdly, he was a disciple of Prajñā Sāgara, whom he also mentioned as 'Vajradhara Yangjirchi (Dbyangs 'chirchi) po bla ma (father lama) Prajñā Samudra,' who was the Second Neichi Toyin's disciple (*ibid.* 198). Fourthly, he was very popular among the Khorchin Mongols who were the devoted followers of the First Neichi Toyin.⁸¹ Fifthly, like Prajñā Sāgara, he wrote this biography at the request of Neichi Toyin's followers.

Let us now turn to the biography of the Second Neichi Toyin Agwanglobsangdambijalsan (Ngag dbang blo btsang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan). As is hinted at in the biography of the First Neichi Toyin, he was not reincarnated in eastern

⁸¹ Dharma Samudra's popularity in Khorchin initiated a long-lasting connection between Mergen Monastery and Bayan-khoshigu Monastery

Inner Mongolia but in Minggan Banner, Ulaanchab League of western Inner Mongolia in 1671. Minggan is short for Muuminggan Banner in Ulaanchab to which all Urad banners belonged. Nobles of Muuminggan Banner, like the Urad nobles, said to be the descendents of Khasar, Chinggis Khan's brother. This means they were related to the Khorchin Mongol nobles, devotees of the First Neichi Toyin. The Second Neichi Toyin's father was Taiji Vachir, and his mother was Adis. The Panchen Lama⁸² predicted the parents' names and the place in which the Second Neichi Toyin would be born. Thus, from the beginning, all the former relationships of the First Neichi Toyin were restored. Firstly, the First Neichi Toyin was a disciple of the Fourth Panchen Lama. Secondly, the followers of the First Neichi Toyin, the Khorchin Mongols, were connected to the Second Neichi Toyin through the Minggan people.

When the Second Neichi Toyin was seven years old, a petition for installing the Second Neichi Toyin was signed by nobles of twenty banners of eastern Inner Mongolia, two Tümed banners of Höhhot, three Urad banners and Minggan Banner. Then the petition was presented by the disciples of the First Neichi Toyin to the Kangxi Emperor. The Urad Mongols' involvement in the affair was probably because of their relationship to Khorchins, and Prajñā sāgara' influence. While the reincarnation of the Neichi Toyin was confirmed by the Panchen Lama, his installation still needed to be approved by the Manchu Emperor. The Kangxi Emperor ordered the petitioners to install the Second Neichi Toyin in the Bağa Juu Monastery in Höhhot rather than Bayan-khoshiguu Monastery, which had been built by Khorchin nobles for the First Neichi Toyin and was where his relics had been placed. This decision conformed to the Fifth Dalai Lama's resolution of sending the First Neichi Toyin to Höhhot.

The Second Neichi Toyin continued the First Neichi Toyin's way of practicing Buddhism in Mongolian. The old disciples of the First Neichi Toyin taught the Second Neichi Toyin all kinds of sūtra and tantra. However, they were not his teachers but remained his 'old disciples' because he was considered to be continuing his previous life. He learnt all the basic knowledge and instructions on the generation and completion stages of Yamāntaka from his old disciples. He did *mtshams* (retreat) on the Yamāntaka with Thirteen Retinues together with Tümed Chagan Diyanchi, who had also been a disciple of the First Neichi Toyin. He started giving consecration of Yamāntaka to his disciples and other monks in Höhhot when he was nineteen years old. In addition to

⁸² This should be the Second (or Fifth) Panchen Lama Lobsang Yehse (1662–1737).

learning from his old disciples, he also received instructions, initiations and consecrations from Jangjia Khutuḡtu and other renowned Tibetan Lamas who resided in Beijing. In 1687, he met Ḡaldan Shiregetü ngags dbang blo gros kyi rgyal mtshan and took the *getsul* vow and *abisheka* (consecration) of the Vajrabhairava with Thirteen Retinues. In general, he took many initiations, guides, mandates (Mon. *daḡan soyurkhal*, *jinang*, Tib. *Rjes gnang*, Skt. *anujñā*) and taken *gelong* vows from the Panchen, Ḡaldan Shiregetü and many other yogis and scholars when he visited Tibet (CHJ: 198).

Unlike the First Neichi Toyin, who 'at the end of the yoga of the fourth session of day and night, would stare at the maṇḍala and pray "if you are Vajradhara and Yamāntaka, please do not let me get into the power of the emperor"' (DCH: 123), the Second Neichi Toyin successfully cooperated with the Manchu Emperor. He went to Beijing to pay his respects to the Kangxi Emperor in the year he was installed in his monastery at the age of nine in 1679. He continued to do so at every New Year celebration and was seated among the high lamas to participate in the New Year services. His request for certificates of renunciation for the monks and new ruling lama was granted when he paid his respect to the emperor in 1690. In 1691, when the emperor held a great gathering in Dolon-nuur, he was seated to the left side of the emperor while Khalkha Jebtsundamba Khutuḡtu was seated to the right. The emperor said that right side is higher in Mongolian custom but that left is higher in Manchu custom. He and the Jebtsundamba Khutuḡtu were given the same amount of gifts (ibid 199: 200). In 1691, the emperor sent him to Khorchin to ask them for their subject Shibege Khuuljin people, who were branch of Manchu people, to be returned to the Manchu court. The emperor stressed that those people had been subject to the ten Khorchin banners who were Neichi Toyin's patron and his *naḡachu* (maternal relatives). As reward for his successful mission, the Second Neichi Toyin was granted 108 certificates of renunciation of monks and other rewards (ibid: 200–202).

As a result of his co-operation with the Emperor, the Second Neichi Toyin not only gained high status and respect, he also gained a place for the Mongolian line of Buddhist practices in Beijing. In 1693, when he paid his New Year respects to the emperor, he was bestowed the Yamāntaka Temple in Beijing as his residence. The accommodation and food for his disciples in the temple were provided by the emperor. Since then, the temple has permanently maintained a Da lama and twenty monks. The First Da Lama was Prajñā Sāgara who was one of his old disciples. The emperor said to

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Title of thesis**Indigenous Efforts and Dimensions of Mongolian Buddhism**

..... — **Exemplified by the Mergen Tradition** —

.....Degree PhD

This thesis investigates the indigenous efforts and dimensions of Mongolian Buddhism on the local and practical levels exemplified by the Mergen Tradition of Inner Mongolia, China. The Mergen Tradition is a set of local Buddhist practices centred in Mergen Monastery, in which Buddhism was practised purely in the Mongolian language. The Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism has survived until the present and its influence has been disseminating to other parts of both Inner Mongolia and Mongolia. The thesis proceeds from general discussion to specific studies, as follows:

Chapter 1 provides a historical overview of the influence and development of Buddhism in Mongolia. It proceeds from Mongols' different levels of interaction with Buddhism to their two national conversions to Tibetan Buddhism. Chapter 2 examines the most common overarching features of Mongolian Buddhism from two main perspectives: single school Gelukpa Buddhism established under Manchu political control and Tibetan spiritual dominance, and the Mongolisation of Buddhist doctrine through Mongolian literary works. Chapter 3 describes the initiation of the Neichi Toyin Line in eastern Mongolia and its use of the Mongolian language instead of Tibetan. Chapter 4 explores the origin, formation and institutionalisation of the Mergen Tradition. Chapter 5 investigates the reasons why such a unique tradition was able to form and persevere under Manchu political control and Tibetan religious dominance. Chapter 6 introduces the practices of the Mergen Tradition by examining Mergen Gegen's publications, including the monastic services he regulated, his liturgical texts, and his works on Vajrabhairava Tantra. Chapter 7 investigates Mergen Gegen's popularisation of Buddhism in the lay community, which became an important element in the Mergen Tradition.

This Thesis illustrates the Mongols' efforts and achievements in indigenising Buddhism while not corrupting it.

the Second Neichi Toyin that he did not need to attend the regular service in the palace because he chanted the texts in Mongolian; instead, he should pray in Mongolian in the Yamāntaka temple. Dharma Samudra specifies that at the time of his writing there had been five generations of Da Lama in the Yamāntaka temple and twenty monks had been regularly staying there (*CHJ*: 201–203). The Second Neichi Toyin was appointed to be the Head Lama of the eight monasteries of Höhhot by the Kangxi Emperor. He accepted the appointment after being urged to do so by his old disciples and Khorchin, Baġarin and other eastern Inner Mongolian nobles who suggested that refusing the appointment would be offensive to the emperor. When he became the Head Lama of Höhhot, where the Tibetan line of practices was dominant, he continued chanting in Mongolian at Baġa Juu Monastery and other branch monasteries, such as Sain Barildulġa Süm-e Tangnustai, Khotala Jirġalangtu Süm-e Taġa and Gegen Nigülesüġchi Süm-e. However, in one of the branch monasteries, West Otachi Monastery, he assigned forty monks to recite prayers in Tibetan.

The Second Neichi Toyin maintained the relationship established between his predecessor and Khorchin Mongols. In 1694, at the request of the nobles of the ten Khorchin banners and with the permission of the emperor, Neichi Toyin was invited to conduct rituals and services in eastern Inner Mongolia. The biography describes the intensity of the meeting of the Neichi Toyin and Khorchin people:

the faith of attraction to the Lama was like a passionate man seeing a beautiful woman; the faith of wishing for this and later lives was like a thirsty person looking for water; the faith for believing in the Lama was like the satisfaction felt when a long separated mother and son meet; the faith of non-betrayal was like a great elephant going into the water without hesitation (*CHJ*: 201–202).

From his biography we can see that the Manchu Emperor especial venerated the Second Neichi Toyin. In 1695, the emperor sent the Second Neichi Toyin as the chief envoy to Tibet to invite the Panchen Lama to court and to find out if the Dalai Lama was alive or not. In 1696, the Kangxi Emperor had Neichi Toyin accompany him in his campaign against Ġaldan⁸³. On the way back, he stayed three days in Neichi Toyin's Baġa Juu and offered his armour and helmet, arrows, bow and sword to the Yamāntaka

⁸³ Ġaldan Boshuġtu Khan (b. 1644, r. 1678–1697), the last Jüŋġar Mongol ruler, challenged the Manchu domination of Mongolia. He was recognised as the emanation-body of the Tibetan incarnation Dben-sa sprul-sku who had been active in Mongolia. In 1656, he went to central Tibet and became a disciple of the First Panchen Lama (1567–1662) and then the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682). In 1666, he returned home. Ġaldan renounced his vows because of internal conflicts within the Jüŋġar khanate. The title Boshuġtu Khan meaning 'khan with the destiny' was bestowed on him by the Dalai Lama.

and other wrathful deities in the monastery. Neichi Toyin was given permission to build several temples and halls in the monastery and was granted white sandalwood and other ornaments to make statues. After the temples and statues were completed, the emperor bestowed the monastery an official name *Buyan-i undurgagchi Süm-e* (Monastery That Augments Merit). In 1698, the Kangxi Emperor took the Second Neichi Toyin and Jebtsundamba Khutughtu to the mausoleum of his ancestors and hunted in his native Manchuria. On the way, the emperor went to the *yama* (grave) of Mañjuśrī Darkhan Qin Wang, where he made an offering and three triple-kowtows. After that, he invited Neichi Toyin and his disciples onto cushions that he had placed himself. Then he presented a ritual scarf to the Second Neichi Toyin and said, 'This is my maternal grandfather and your great patron.'⁸⁴ Please make a good wish and prayer for him.' After making offerings to the emperor's ancestors in Manchuria, they went to Mūgden⁸⁵. Neichi Toyin was taken to the Shira Süm-e (Yellow Temple), the worshipping place of the Emperor Chongde (r. 1636–1644) and made offering to the buddhas and deities in the temple.

Reading through the biographies of any high lamas of Mongolia, we can see that all had special relationships with the emperors, which varied depending on their political prestige under the Manchu administration of Mongolian Buddhism. However, the question arises: why was the Second Neichi Toyin so venerated while the First Neichi Toyin was exiled? The answer lies with the Khorchin Mongols, who were the devoted followers of the First Neichi Toyin. The Khorchin Mongols were a close ally and powerful supporter of the Manchus when the latter rose to power. At the time of the Second Neichi Toyin, the Manchus were still cautious about not offending them.⁸⁶ Friendship with Neichi Toyin helped the Manchu rulers to gain the continuous support of the Khorchin Mongols. Furthermore, giving an important position to the Second Neichi Toyin could not cause the Khorchin Mongols to unite against the Manchu state

⁸⁴ Mañjuśrī Darkhan Qin Wang was the son of Bingtu Khatun, the devoted patron of the First Neichi Toyin. He was also Emperor Kangxi's maternal grandfather.

⁸⁵ Present Shenyang, which had been the first capital of Manchu rulers before conquering the whole China.

⁸⁶ A legend about Darkhan Qin Wang of Khorchin Left Wing Middle Banner, who was the maternal uncle of Emperor Kangxi, tells that he once visited the palace. However, his nephew, the emperor did not show him enough respect. This greatly offended the Darkhan Qin Wang. After he came back home, he decided to take his army to attack the Manchu state. Hearing this, Emperor Kangxi was in a panic and sent for Chagan Diyanchi of Tūmed, who was the disciple of the First Neichi Toyin, to ask for help. Chagan Diyanchi went to see the Darkhan Qin Wang, dissuaded him, and stopped the attack. This story illustrates both the Khorchin's position in the Manchu state and Neichi Toyin's influence among Khorchins (Toġtungg-a 1985: 28–30).

because, unlike the First Neichi Toyin, the Second Neichi Toyin was no longer living among the Khorchin Mongols. Also, the First Neichi Toyin directly contradicted Tibet and the Manchu court, making him more dangerous. The Second Neichi Toyin cooperated actively with the court, making Mongols loyal to him, loyal to the state.

While the Second Neichi Toyin was successfully expanding the Mongolian line of Buddhist practices in Höhhot, eastern Mongols were also working to maintain it. Firstly, the disciples of the First Neichi Toyin who stayed in eastern Inner Mongolia remained active. For example, in Monggūljīn (former Tümed East Banner), the First Neichi Toyin was called *echige lama* (father lama) and several of his disciples stayed there and became well known. One of them was called Tümed Chāgan Diyanchi, who meditated for sixteen years in a cave after Neichi Toyin was expelled to Höhhot. At the request of the banner ruler, he returned to religious activities in society. First, he built a monastery in East Tümed Banner. Because of his successful cooperation with the Manchu emperor, the monastery grew very large. Later, it became the well-known Monggūljīn Gegen Süm-e, and also called Eastern *Juu* (*jobo*) in contrast to Lhasa which was called Western Juu by the Mongols. However, because of its fame and close relationship to the Manchu court, the Mongolian line of practising did not last long in Monggūljīn Gegen Süm-e (Altangarudi 1994: 178).

Another of the Neichi Toyin's disciples who stayed in East Tümed Banner was Tabun Diyanchi. There is an interesting story about his seventh reincarnation, Dawari Erdeni. When he was installed as the *shirege lama* (abbot lama) of a monastery, he saw a tiger jumping towards him and he was so scared that he shouted out 'tiger' and fell from his chair. He remained unconscious for several days. People say that this happened because he had not made prostrations to the relics of *echige lama* (father lama), the Neichi Toyin, which were kept and worshipped in the monastery (Altangarudi 1994: 178). Dawari Erdeni died in 1951 when he was forty-six years old. Another typical example of the Neichi Toyin's legacy in eastern Inner Mongolia is Shongkhur Süm-e, the first monastery built in Khorchin East Wing North Banner. After its construction in the 1680s, the *Kanjur* was brought from Chāgan Diyanchi of Tümed in Höhhot to be worshipped in the monastery (Borjigin 1993: 304). This might have been the Chāgan Diyanchi of the Tümed who was the disciple of the First Neichi Toyin and who asked the Panchen Lama about the Neichi Toyin's rebirth (*CHJ*: 187). This Chāgan Diyanchi of the Tümed also did a meditation retreat with the Second Neichi Toyin in the latter's

youth (*CHJ*: 196). It is quite possible that when Shongkhur Monastery requested the *Kanjur*, as the Second Neichi Toyin was still very young, Chagan Diyanchi handled the Khorchins' request. This *Kanjur* may also have been the same Mongolian *Kanjur* that the First Neichi Toyin copied and distributed among the Eastern Mongols. Shongkhur Monastery was rebuilt in 1692, and consecrated by the Echige Bogda (holy father) of Höhhot in 1694 (Borjigin 1993: 305). This Echige Bogda was no doubt the Second Neichi Toyin, as he was invited to eastern Inner Mongolia in 1694 and was warmly welcomed by the Mongols there. However, there is an interesting account about the transition from Mongolian to Tibetan chanting in Shongkhur Monastery. In 1706, the Da Lama Kichiyenggüi of Shongkhur Monastery made a suggestion to the ruling prince of the Banner, saying, 'The chanting of the western Tümed Aster Lama's place is being conducted in Tibetan. Its melody was beautiful and the rhythm was clear. Our monastery should also chant all the readings in Tibetan so as to make them more uniform.' The Prince agreed with the Da Lama's suggestion and made all the monks below forty years old chant in Tibetan (Borjigin 1993: 306). This means that until 1706, Shongkhur Monastery conducted Buddhist services in Mongolian following the legacy of the First Neichi Toyin and had had a close connection with the Neichi Toyin Line in Höhhot. We can infer from this point that many monasteries in eastern Inner Mongolia had been practising Neichi Toyin's tradition for some time. However, because of lack of material, it is not sure how long and to what extent the tradition was sustained in eastern Inner Mongolia.

The Second Neichi Toyin's cooperation with the Manchu rulers resulted in two contradictory tendencies: 1) it strengthened his Mongolian line of Buddhist practices. Not only was Baga Juu expanded, but also several branch monasteries were built, including the uniquely constructed Five Stupa Monastery. Except for the West Otachi Monastery, these branch monasteries all conducted their services in Mongolian. 2) The introduction of Tibetan chanting into one of his monasteries would have undermined the Mongolian line of practice. However, this was prevented because the next Neichi Toyin lost his power as a ruling lama.

While the Second Neichi Toyin successfully cooperated with the Manchu rulers, the situation changed in the time of the Third Neichi Toyin, which was not surprising.

The Third Neichi Toyin

In *Neichi Toyin khutuḡtu-yin tabun düri-yin tobchi chedig* (A brief biography of the five reincarnations of Neichi Toyin Khutuḡtu, hereafter *TCH*), the life of the Third Neichi Toyin is described quite extensively but the lives of the Fourth and Fifth Neichi Toyins are mentioned very briefly. There is nothing said about the Fifth Neichi Toyin apart from his birth place. The Third Neichi Toyin (170?–1768) was born into the noble Günüge's family of Urad Middle Banner. After confirmation of the Lhamo Chos skyong about his reincarnation, the disciples and nobles of Urad and Khorchin reported it to the Kangxi Emperor. The emperor ordered, 'As he is exactly the father lama of mine, immediately let the guru and disciples join together' (*TCH*: 3). So the Third Neichi Toyin was installed in Baḡa Juu in 1710. At the suggestion of the emperor, he took the *getsul* vows from the Second Jangjia Khutuḡtu Aḡwanglobsangchoindan (Ngag dbang blo bzang chos ldan) when he had an audience with the Emperor in Beijing in 1711. He was given the name Dambinima (Bstan pa'i nyi ma) for the *getsul* vow by the Jangjia Khutuḡtu. When he saw Emperor Yongzheng in 1724, the latter suggested him to go to Tibet to study with the Dalai and Panchen lamas. However, when he was preparing to leave, the emperor sent an order saying that he did not need to go because the Panchen Lama had passed away and the Dalai Lama was still too young. He suggested that Neichi Toyin take the *gelong* (fully ordained monk) vow and other initiation and instructions from the Kanjurwa Nomun Khan⁸⁷. The Third Neichi Toyin did so and was given the name Lobsangdambinima (Blo bzang bstan pa'i nyi ma) for the *gelong* vow. He also took Hevajra initiation, the mandate of *Guhyasamāja*, Cakarasamvara, Yamāntaka and Amitāyus empowerment and other guidance of generation and completion stages and stages of the path to enlightenment.

In 1739, the Emperor bestowed upon the Third Neichi Toyin the golden seal of the ruling lama to govern the Buddhism of Höhhot. The biography says that he strictly administered the monks with Vinaya and state law. From the biography, it is already clear that the Manchu emperor's control over the Third Neichi Toyin transformed him into the one of the many high positioned reincarnations in the Tibetan line. He was

⁸⁷ Nomun Khan is the Mongolian translation of Tibetan *Chos kyi rgyal po*. Kanjurwa Nomun Khan was the title given to Blo bzang tshul khriḡs (1680–1755) by the Seventh Dalai Lama for his mastering of the Kanjur text. He was also known as Somadi Shila. He was granted a monastery in Dolon-nuur and his successors reached to the highest rank in Inner Mongolian Buddhism.

ordered to study in Tibet but when it became impossible to do so he was ordered to study with another high lama of the Tibetan line. As he was obeying the orders well he was even given the golden seal.

However, although not mentioned in the biography, other archival resources suggest that he was dismissed from his position of ruling lama because he lost the seal (Altanorgil 1989: 28). This might signify the Manchu state's rejection of Neichi Toyin's Mongolian line when its influence actually remained or increased. The biography states that he has given initiation and mandate of Avalokiteśvara, Vairocana, Guhyasamāja, Samvara, Yamāntaka and Amitāyus to the clergy and lay patrons of Urad, Khorchin, Jarud, Tümed, Baġarin, Mingġan and Ordus (*TCH*: 9). Furthermore, he still followed his predecessors' practices. He meditated in Khargal Cave, Abaġa Khara Cave and Shira Malagaitu Cave, where the First Neichi Toyin did meditation for thirty-five years, and his magical power was greatly elaborated upon in the biography (*TCH*: 13). So, the loss of the Third Neichi Toyin's position was inevitable from the point of view of the Mongolian line. However, because of that loss of power, the tradition of Mongolian practices was kept until the Communists took power. From this, we can conclude that close attachment to the Manchu state would have inevitably led to the subsumption of the Mongolian line under the Tibetan line.

Decline of the Neichi Toyin Line

After the Third Neichi Toyin, the power of the Neichi Toyin Line declined according to *TCH*, the Fourth Neichi Toyin was born as the second son of Khorchin Jasaġtu Jun Wang Aġwangsabdan in 1767. The nobles of the ten Khorchin banners sent representatives to Tibet and gave alms to the Dalai and Panchen lamas and the seventy thousand monks in Lhasa. The representatives asked the Lhamo Chos skyong and other oracles about the reincarnation of the Neichi Toyin and together they wrote a certificate that confirmed the second son of Khorchin prince Aġwangsabdan as the reincarnation of the Neichi Toyin. 'The yellow and black [monk and lay] almsgivers were overjoyed like an only son who had met his parents' (*TCH*: 9). The Khorchin nobles reported this to the emperor, and the latter ordered to let the lama and disciples meet as soon as possible. The Fourth Neichi Toyin was installed in the Baġa Juu in Höhhot in 1772. He took the *getsul* vows from Kanjurwa Nomun Khan and was given the name Ishijambalsangbo (Ye shes 'jam dpal bzang po). In addition to having taken Avalokiteśvara initiation and

instruction from Kanjurwa Nom-un Khan, he studied with the reincarnation of Yangjirchi Lama.⁸⁸ In the forty-fifth year of the Qianlong Emperor's reign (1780), he met the sixth Panchen Lama dpal ldan ye shes at the Yellow River on the latter's way to Beijing. He took the empowerment of Amitāyus and received the mandate of Avalokiteśvara. He also invited the Panchen Lama to Höhhot. The biography says that the Panchen Lama said to him, 'We two have not met for a long time' and that when they parted, Neichi Toyin requested that he should not be separated from the Panchen Lama in all his lifetimes and that he should meet him in Shambala⁸⁹. The Panchen Lama granted his request. The Fourth Neichi Toyin died in 1783.

According to Altanorgil (1982: 128), the Fourth Neichi Toyin built a monastery in Chakhar Blue Bordered Banner (Chakhar Köbegetü Köke Khoshigu). The Mongolian line of Buddhism was still expanding at his time.

The Fifth Neichi Toyin was born to an administrator of Khorchin Tüshiyetü Qin Wang Banner. The biography does not give any more information about the Fifth Neichi Toyin. According to Altanorgil, the Fifth Neichi Toyin was installed in 1790 and died in 1811. The Sixth Neichi Toyin was born to a noble of Urad Right Duke Banner, was installed in 1818 and died in 1875. He went to Beijing to see the emperor and fulfilled his staying duty ten times (1982: 129).⁹⁰ The Seventh Neichi Toyin was born to a noble of Da Güng Banner of Khorchin. He was recognised by the drawing lot from the golden urn⁹¹ and installed in 1885. He died in 1889. When Pozdneyev visited Höhhot in 1893, Bağa Juu was in a state of decline. The monks attributed the condition of their monastery to the absence of Neichi Toyin Khutuḡtu, who had died five years earlier (Pozdneyev 1893: 39).

To sum up, politics played a crucial role in the rise and fall of Neichi Toyin's line of Mongolian Buddhist practices. The First Neichi Toyin initiated practices of Buddhism in the Mongolian language among the Khorchins and other eastern Mongols, who were the strongest among the Mongol groups at that time. Nevertheless, the First Neichi

⁸⁸ The reincarnation of the Yangjirchi Lama was that of the Urad Güüshi Biligündalai, Skt. Prajñā Sāgara, and the author of the biography of the first Neichi Toyin.

⁸⁹ Mongols believe that the Panchen Lama will be the twenty-fifth king of Shambala, the only paradise on earth. During his reign, there will be a final war between Buddhists and heretics in which the Panchen Lama will lead the army. Anyone participating in the war will be liberated. Therefore, Mongols hope to have an audience with the Panchen Lama and to take blessings from him to ensure future rebirth in Shambala when the Panchen Lama rein it.

⁹⁰ See Chapter 2 regarding high lamas' staying duty in Beijing.

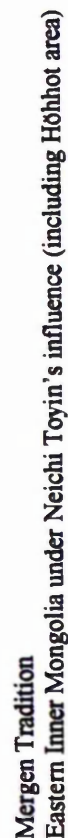
⁹¹ See Chapter 2 regarding the 'Drawing Lots from Golden Urn.'

Toyin's success and popularity, as well as his defiance of the state, led to his persecution. It was during the time of the Second Neichi Toyin that the Manchu emperor showed great favour towards him. That was again because of the Khorchin Mongols, who still had strong devotion to the Neichi Toyin. Favour towards Neichi Toyin helped the Manchu gain the continuous support of the Khorchin because of Neichi Toyin's distance from the Khorchin political centre. However, all the reincarnations of Neichi Toyin were invariably found among Khorchin, Urad or Minggan Mongols. When Baġa Juu lost its ability to install the Neichi Toyin due to sinicisation of Höhhot Mongols in addition to unpopularity of Mongolian line of Buddhism in the area, the Khorchins installed the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Neichi Toyin in Bayan-khoshigu Monastery. The last Neichi Toyin was recognised in 1941 and died in 1995 (Delige 1998: 343). During the Inner Mongolian independence movement in the 1930s, when political activists set up a theocratic government following the Outer Mongolian example, they chose none other than Neichi Toyin as their leader (Humphrey 1996: 9). Neichi Toyin's line, thus, has had a strong and long lasting influence among Mongols and Mongolian nationalism. This was exactly what the Manchu rulers feared, and the reason why they expelled the First Neichi Toyin from Khorchin territory, and sent him to Höhhot.

However, without much stir, another line of Mongolian Buddhist practices derived from Neichi Toyin's line in Urad Right Banner of western Inner Mongolia and developed into a systematic tradition—the Mergen Tradition.

Inner Mongolia under the Qing Dynasty

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Eastern Inner Mongolia under Neichi Toyin's influence (including Höhhot area)

CHAPTER 4. The Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism

1. Derivation of the Mergen Tradition

The Neichi Toyin Line barely sustained Buddhist practices using the Mongolian language. While no other branches of the Neichi Toyin Line in Eastern Mongolia sustained their practice in Mongolian, one branch, the Mergen Tradition formed and did continue with their practices and survived until the present. Ġaldanwangchugdorji writes,

Torgud Gegen, the first generation of the Toyin Gegen (Neichi Toyin),⁹² newly advanced the extraordinary tantrism of Tsongkhapa that combined the sūtra and tantra among the completely fortunate people in the East during the reign of Degedü Erdemtü (Chi. Chong De, 1636–1644). Therefore, Mergen Gegen called him “Second Tsongkhapa” and prayed to him. At that time, [Neichi Toyin] taught reading and memorising [the doctrine] in the Mongolian mother tongue in conformity with the beginners’ level of the mind. As a result of reading, the enthusiasm of people, with the compassion of the Boġda Lama (His Holiness) and power of people’s faith, more and more people achieved spiritual attainment (*siddhi*) and awareness (*jñāna*) and, furthermore, religion was widely disseminated in Tibetan and Mongolian.’ ‘Boġda Toyin Khutuġtu-yin Gegen (Neichi Toyin) bestowed the quintessential instructions of listening, contemplating and, meditating to the completely fortunate people of our direction in the Mongolian mother tongue and led them to the path of liberation. The Mergen Gegen further promoted the path and made it into a type of practice with new translations...’ (DB: 234).

This statement suggests that the First Neichi Toyin successfully initiated practices of the Gelukpa School of Buddhism in the Mongolian language in the East and Mergen Gegen continued this practice and promoted it into a new tradition with new translations. In this chapter, I investigate the formation of the Mergen Tradition and the institutionalisation of the tradition by the Third Mergen Gegen. Two factors mark the start of the Mergen Tradition: the foundation of Mergen Monastery and the initiation of the Mergen Gegen line of reincarnations.

Mergen Monastery is located south of Mona Uul Mountain and north of the Yellow River. Mergen Monastery has been known as Mergen Keid, Mergen Juu,

⁹² For the purpose of veneration, Neichi Toyin is rarely addressed directly, but is addressed as Boġda Lama and other names. Ġaldanwangchugdorji uses the title Toyin Gegen here, which means ‘a reincarnation lama who has noble origin’. *Toyin* refers to a lama of noble origin, usually of Chinggis Khan’s lineage. Torgud is the name of a western Mongol tribe from which the First Neichi Toyin originated. He also uses Boġda Toyin Khutuġtu-yin Gegen, adding the highest title, *khutuġtu*, for a reincarnated lama that was usually conferred by the Dalai Lama and Manchu Emperor. However, Neichi Toyin never had this title officially conferred upon him.

Mergen Süm-e and the name given by the Manchu court, Shashin-i Badaragulugchi Süm-e (Chi. Guang Fa Si, meaning 'Monastery That Prospers Religion'). It is probable that Mergen Monastery was at first called *keid* because of the tantric tradition of Neichi Toyin and Mergen Diyanchi. It was probably called *juu* following the examples of Höhhot temples which were nearby. With the gradual institutionalisation, and because of its official name, *süm-e* became more common. Mergen Süm-e was the chief monastery of the Urad Right Duke banner of Ulaanchab League (present Urad Front Banner of Linhe City). In the 1960s, Mergen Monastery came under the jurisdiction of Bugutu (Chi. Baotou) city when the eastern part of Urad Front Banner was divided into the territory of the city.

The Urad (meaning craftsmen) people were included among the subjects allocated by Chinggis Khan to his brother Khabtu Khasar who occupied eastern part of the Mongolian Empire. Urad nobles considered themselves to be descendents of Khabtu Khasar, a branch of the Khorchin Mongols. However, the name Urad has only been used since 17th century. According to historical records, a fifteenth generation descendent of Khabtu Khasar, Burakhai, named the people he ruled Urad and divided them into three groups in the Külün Buir region. They subjected themselves to the Manchu rulers together with the Khorchin around 1633 and gained political merit by fighting for the Manchu court. In 1648, they were organised into Urad Front (Urad Emüinedü), Urad Middle (Urad Dumda) and Urad Rear (Urad Khoitu) banners and their chiefs were made Jasag (Ruler) and had the title Güng (Chi. 公, Duke) conferred upon them. In the same year, they were moved from Külün Buir to the present Mona Uul land by the Qing court to guard the region from Khalkha Mongols from the north and Oirat Mongols from the west. In 1753, the three Urad banners were renamed Urad Right Duke Banner (Urad Baragun Güng-ün Khoshigu), Urad Middle Duke Banner (Urad Dumda Güng-ün Khoshigu) and Urad Left Duke Banner (Urad Jegün Güng-ün Khoshigu) and became part of Ulaanchab League. After the establishment of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in 1947, the original names of the banners were restored, and they were reorganised into Bayan-nuur League. In 1952, the Middle and Rear Urad banners were combined into Urad Middle-Rear Banner. Since 1960, there have been several changes but the three Urad banners have remained the same. In 2002, the league administrative unit was changed from Bayan-nuur league into Linhe City. I use Right Banner instead of Front Banner since this title was used for a longer time.

There is no information about Urad contact with Buddhism before they moved to the Mona Uul region. However, it is quite possible that they had already had some contact with the First Neichi Toyin as they were related to the Khorchins and had been together with them fighting in the name of the Manchu court. After the Urads settled in the Mona Uul area, they built their own monastery. There are two episodes about the introduction of Buddhism in Urad in *DB* one of which states,

The reason why my ancestors worshipped this lama [Mergen Gegen] and the origin of building the monastery is that Duke Darmashiri generated faith since our great grandfather Duke Nomun had made Boḡda Toyin Gegen [Neichi Toyin] his lama. Duke Darmashiri cooperated with a man called Mangkha and built the first monastery in a place called Mergen. Therefore, the previous Mergen Monastery was called Güng-ün Süm-e [Monastery of the Duke]⁹³. Duke Darmashiri also invited Mergen Diyanchi Lama from a place called Khairtu and installed him on the throne of Mergen Monastery, because Boḡda Toyin Gegen [Neichi Toyin] gave a golden Tsongkhapa⁹⁴ and appointed Mergen Gegen to the Duke Nomun as his lama at his request (*DB*: 5).

The other episode states,

Mergen Diyanchi Dinu-a was well-known as the first of the dearest heartfelt sons, the thirty disciples of Boḡda Toyin Gegen. It is recorded in the archive kept in our government that in the time of Nomun, the fourth⁹⁵ imperial Duke, [he] requested the Neichi Toyin Khutuḡtu Lama and invited his disciple Mergen Diyanchi Lama and worshipped him in his banner.' 'Later he [Mergen Diyanchi Lama] changed his robe [passed away] and reincarnated into the family of a man called Solungkhur of the Urad Middle Duke Banner. Our fifth Duke Darmadai⁹⁶ also invited him and worshipped him. His name was recorded as Danjinjamsu in the archive presented to the great Department (*DB*: 178).⁹⁷

⁹³ There was another monastery which took the name Güng-ün Süm-e (the Duke's Monastery) when Duke Darmashiri invited the Second Mergen Diyanchi to the monastery he had commissioned, which became the Mergen Monastery. Güng-ün Süm-e must be the origin of Baraḡun Süm-e (West Monastery); the official name given to the latter by the Manchu Emperor was Bayasḡulang-i Khuriyaḡchi Süm-e (Monastery That Accumulates Joy). Most of *DB* is about this Monastery because *DB* was written to record the dukes' favour to the religion. The author did not write much about Mergen Monastery because there was already a detailed archive of it in existence. Popular reports say that there were two records about the Mergen Monastery known as the 'Yellow Book' and 'Brown Book' (Galluu 1986: 2). According to Ḡaldanwangchuḡdorji, there was one record kept in the Da Lama's office of Mergen Monastery and another in the banner government office (*DB*: 5, 184). It is quite possible that the one kept in the Da Lama's office was the 'Yellow Book' and the one kept in the banner government office was the 'Brown Book'. However, these two books did not survive the Cultural Revolution.

⁹⁴ It should be a golden or gilded statue of the Tsongkhapa.

⁹⁵ Nomun appears to be the fifth Duke in *A Brief History of Urad Three Duke Banners* (Buyanbadarkhu 1987).

⁹⁶ Duke Darmadai was the eldest son of Duke Nomun, who succeeded his father's position in 1684 and died in 1689 (Möngke 1994, 214).

⁹⁷ Great Department (Mon. Yeke Jurgan) refers to the 'Mongolian Department' or the 'Court of Administration of the Autonomous Mongolian States' (Mon. Ḡadaḡadu Mongḡul-un Törö-yi Jasakhu Yabudal-un Yamun, Chi. Lifan Yuan, 理藩院) that handled Mongolian affairs.

DB also notes that Mergen Monastery was first built in the forty-first year of the Kangxi Emperor (1701) and the second reincarnation of Mergen Diyanchi was invited to the throne of Mergen Monastery in the forty-fourth year (*DB*: 234). He also notes,

Duke Darmashiri invited the reincarnation of the high Lama from the place called Khairtu⁹⁸ to his monastery and presented him with a chair and cushion [i.e. given him the throne of the monastery], Maṇḍala and ritual scarf [Mon. *khadaḡ*, Tib. *kha btags*], and Janggi⁹⁹ Amuḡulang presented a chair [also symbolising the throne] on twelfth of the White Month [first lunar month of a year] of the forty-fourth year of the Kangxi Emperor, the year of the Monkey year¹⁰⁰ [1704]. The lama, quite possibly, was the reincarnation of the Mergen Diyanchi Dinw-a, Danjinjamsu. After the Mergen Diyanchi-yin Gegen was invited to the throne of the Banner Monastery, Mergen Monastery in the forty-fourth year of the Kangxi Emperor [1704], the Gegen ordered his disciples to come to stay in Güng-ün Süm-e [Duke's monastery] in the fiftieth year of Kangxi [1710] (*DB*: 178, 228).

From the above record, we can infer that the Mergen Diyanchi Dinu-a was appointed to the Duke Nomun by Neichi Toyin to be a lama to worship. However, it is not known whether the Mergen Diyanchi Dinu-a stayed in Urad Right Duke Banner or not, or if there was even a monastery. After Mergen Diyanchi Dinu-a died, Duke Darmadai sought his reincarnation, i.e. the Second Mergen Diyanchi, and his name was Danjinjamsu. Again, there is no mention of whether the Second Mergen Diyanchi was installed in a monastery or not. Then Duke Darmashiri built a monastery and invited the Second Mergen Diyanchi from Khairtu. This became Mergen Monastery and the banner monastery. Here it is not clear if there was a monastery in Khairtu or not, nor if the Second Mergen Diyanchi had been staying in a monastery before he moved to Mergen Monastery. But the statement 'the previous Mergen Monastery was called Güng-ün Süm-e' [Duke's Monastery] implies there had been a monastery before Darmashiri's Mergen Monastery and either or both the First and Second Mergen Diyanchi resided there. In his text I-14 (fourteenth text of volume I), Mergen Gegen notes,

Before Mergen Monastery was built, the place was called Mergen because there was someone called Mergen living in the vicinity of Mona Mountain. Later the Ruling Duke Darmashiri of Urad Front Banner built a monastery at the mouth

⁹⁸ Möngke asserts that Duke Nomun built a small monastery in the place called Khairtu and installed the First Mergen Diyanchi Dinu-a there. When Darmashiri built Mergen Monastery and invited the Second Mergen Diyanchi, the Monastery in Khairtu became the Duke's Monastery (Möngke 1994: 50). This seems reasonable although there is no mention of these events at all in *DB*.

⁹⁹ *Janggi* is a Manchu word that refers to a head of a *Sumu* ('arrow', an administrative unit).

¹⁰⁰ There is a year difference in counting Kangxi's year coronation i.e. 1661 or 1662. Therefore the forty-fourth year is said to be the year of the blue monkey (1704) or the year of the blue rooster (1705).

of the Mergen [Valley] due to his faith, for the sake of the benefit of living beings and religion and the longevity of the Mañjuśrī Holy Lord [Manchu Kangxi Emperor], and invited Mergen Diyanchi Lama to stay in it. Since then the Monastery was called Mergen Monastery’.

Möngke rightly pointed out that the Neichi Toyin, who appointed Mergen Diyanchi Lama to the Duke Nomun, cannot have been the First Neichi Toyin (1557–1653) but must be the second one (1671–1703).

It is worth noting that the Mona Uul area was very close to Höhhot, the centre of Inner Mongolian Buddhism and where the Tibetan Line of Buddhism predominated. There were long-established high lamas in Höhhot. Why did Duke Nomun not worship any of the high lamas in Höhhot but instead choose Neichi Toyin? There are two possible reasons. It may be because of his ethnic relationship with the Khorchins, the patrons of Neichi Toyin. Also, he, or his predecessors and his people had already had some contact with or been influenced by Neichi Toyin.

Mergen Diyanchi was a key figure for the foundation of Mergen Monastery. The name Mergen Diyanchi first appears in the biography of the First Neichi Toyin. However, there are two Mergen Diyanchis mentioned in the *DCH*. One is Arigun Mergen Diyanchi, and the other is simply Mergen Diyanchi. When the First Neichi Toyin went to meditate in the Choǵtu Sümbür Ağula (Magnificent Sumeru Mountain), Abaǵa Khara-yin Ağui (Cave of Uncle Black) situated east of Höhhot, Arigun Mergen Diyanchi was already meditating there. At first, Neichi Toyin served the Arigun Mergen Diyanchi as a disciple until the latter recognised him as an extraordinary lama and regretted the way he had treated him (*DCH*: 115–116). He was described as the one who ‘gained the one pointed *samādhi*’ (*DCH*: 128). By the time Neichi Toyin arrived in eastern Inner Mongolia, Arigun Mergen Diyanchi had already been there for some time because of military unrest in the Höhhot area. He offered all the wealth he had accumulated to Neichi Toyin and requested that he could follow him as his lama for the rest of his life and never be separated (*ibid*: 133). It seems that he stayed with Neichi Toyin from then on, accompanying the latter when he was sent to Höhhot by the Fifth Dalai Lama. When Neichi Toyin died, Arigun Mergen Diyanchi was put in charge of the temple that was built over the stupa on the spot where Neichi Toyin’s body was cremated (*ibid*: 177). We do not know if he stayed to guard the temple in eastern Inner

Mongolia or went back to Höhhot. No other material about Arigun Mergen Diyanchi is available. In *DCH*, Arigun Mergen Diyanchi is never abbreviated as Mergen Diyanchi.

The other Mergen Diyanchi is mentioned twice in the *DCH*. He was in the first place and before Arigun Mergen Diyanchi in a list of the First Neichi Toyin's major disciples (ibid: 128). Mergen Diyanchi also appears in the colophon of the *DCH*. Prajñā Sāgara states that he used the notebook of the 'veracious, faultless, truly sagacious and scrupulous Mergen Diyanchi' (ibid: 183).



Mergen Monastery after restoration, Photo by Hurelbaatar, 1995.



Mergen Monastery after restoration, Photo by Hurelbaatar, 1995.

The Mergen Diyanchi who was appointed to Urad Right Duke Banner must be one of the above two disciples. It seems more likely to be Mergen Diyanchi rather than Arigun Mergen Diyanchi. Above accounts about him match the account in *DB* that states, 'Mergen Diyanchi Dinu-a was well-known as the first of the dearest heartfelt sons, the thirty disciples of the Bogda Neichi Toyin Gegen' and was appointed as the lama to the Urad Right Duke Banner (*DB*: 177). However, there is an additional name Dinw-a, found here and in other instances in *DB* (*ibid*: 178; 184). Neither of the two Mergen Diyanchi in *DCH* have the name Dinw-a. The assertion of Möngke and other scholars that Arigun Mergen Diyanchi was the first of the Mergen Gegen line of reincarnations therefore has no basis. Their addition of Dinu-a to Arigun Mergen Diyanchi is groundless (Möngke 1994: 52; Galluu 2003: 25). By contrast, Khurchabilig's suggestion that the Mergen Diyanchi was the Ariyan Diwa is reasonable (Khurchabilig 1997: 178). Ariyan Diwa used to be called Chagan Ubashi when he was a disciple of Bogda Chagan Lama. When Chagan Ubashi saw Neichi Toyin's magical power, he decided to follow Neichi Toyin. Neichi Toyin took him to be his disciple with the approval of the Bogda Chagan Lama and gave him the name Ariyan Diwa. Khurchabilig assumes that Dinu-a is a variation of Diwa. So Ariyan Diwa was the first disciple of the Neichi Toyin, which matches the consistent saying that the Mergen Diyanchi was the first of all the disciple of the Neichi Toyin. It is also reasonable to suppose that he was called Mergen Diyanchi because he was accomplished at *diyana* meditation. Unfortunately, Khurchabilig still confuses Mergen Diyanchi Dinu-a with Arigun Mergen Diyanchi.

As Mergen Diyanchi was first appointed to be lama of Duke Nomun by the Second Neichi Toyin, it is also necessary to look into *CHJ*, for verification. The old disciples of the First Neichi Toyin found, recognised and installed the Second Neichi Toyin and conducted his early education. However, neither Arigun Mergen Diyanchi nor Mergen Diyanchi is mentioned among them. On the contrary, the Second Neichi Toyin gave Guhyasamāja initiation and others to his disciples who were headed by Mergen Diyanchi Bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho (*CHJ*: 225). When the Second Neichi Toyin was invited to visit the Khorchins at twenty-four years old, there were too many people who requested initiations, instructions, intuitive instructions and teachings for him to do on his own, and so he assigned the first of the accompanying disciples Mergen Diyanchi Bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho and others to carry out the teachings (*CHJ*: 205). It is certain that

Mergen Diyanchi cannot be either of the two Mergen Diyanchis who appear in the *DCH*. Before he died, the Second Neichi Toyin assigned Bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho and others to teach the other disciples (*CHJ*: 234). When the *CHJ* relates the accomplishments of the disciples of the Second Neichi Toyin, Mergen Diyanchi Btsan 'dzin rgya mtso is mentioned first and described as 'the first and best of the disciples, the one of wisdom, of good will and destination, perfected with virtue, majesty and splendour' (*CHJ*: 240). This matches the statement made about the Mergen Diyanchi in *DCH*. Mergen Diyanchi took his own intelligent disciples to Gütüshiri Mergen Shiditü of Ordos¹⁰¹ to learn Mongolian *alikali* script, reading and writing rules of nine kinds of scripts such as Indian Landza script, and translation from Tibetan into Mongolian, as well as the profoundly secret 'black and white way of astrology' (*CHJ*: 240). We can see that a certain Mergen Diyanchi was the best and first of the disciples of the Second Neichi Toyin. However, he was not among the old disciples of the First Neichi Toyin who taught the Second Neichi Toyin. On the contrary, he was taught by the Second Neichi Toyin. Furthermore, the Mergen Diyanchi accompanied the Second Neichi Toyin until he died. This Mergen Diyanchi was probably the reincarnation of the Mergen Diyanchi mentioned in *DCH*. However, *CHJ* does not provide a clear picture of how the Mergen Diyanchi was appointed to Duke Nomun and what happened to him after that appointment.

Looking at *DB*, things became clearer from a very brief account about the Second Mergen Diyanchi.

After he [the First Mergen Diyanchi] changed his cloak [died], he reincarnated in the family of a man called Solungkhur of Urad Middle Duke Banner, and was invited and made a lama by our Fifth Duke Darmadai¹⁰². His name was recorded as Danjinjamsu in the archive presented to the government office. On the 12th of the white month [first month of a year] of the forty-fourth year of Kangxi [1704], the Duke Darmashiri¹⁰³ invited the reincarnation of the High Lama [the Second Mergen Diyanchi Damjinjamsu] from a place called Khairtu to his monastery. In the fifty-fifth year of Kangxi [1715], the Second Mergen Diyanchi Danjinjamsu went to Dolon-nuur to see the Second Jangjia Khutuḡtu Agwanglobsangchoindan and received many initiations and consecrations and presented the latter with two hundred *lang* of silver and two hundred horses. He died in the fifty-sixth year of Kangxi [1716], and his relics were enshrined in a sandalwood stupa and placed in the worshipping hall behind the great hall of

¹⁰¹ Ordos is a Mongol group who inhabit the plateau south of the Yellow River in Inner Mongolia. *Ordos* is plural form of means *ordun* which means 'palace'. This group of Mongols are called so because they look after Chinggis Khan's mausoleum.

¹⁰² Duke Darmadai was the eldest son of Duke Nomun, who succeeded his father's position in 1684 and died in 1689 (Möngke 1994, 214).

¹⁰³ This was the Sixth Duke of Urad Right Duke Banner.

Mergen Monastery (*DB*: 178).

As Danjinjamsu is the Mongolian pronunciation of Tibetan Bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho, it is the same as the name of the Mergen Diyanchi in the *CHJ*. The period of the lifetime of the two lamas, the Second Neichi Toyin (1671–1703) and the Second Mergen Diyanchi (1680s–1716), also come very close. Even if there is no definite account about the Second Mergen Diyanchi of Mergen Monastery studying with the Second Neichi Toyin, it is not impossible. It is also possible, then, that the Mergen Line and Neichi Toyin Line were still closely connected at that time.

We can assume that the First Mergen Diyanchi was invited to be lama of Duke Nomun when he was very old, in the time of the Second Neichi Toyin's early age. Not long after, he died and his reincarnation, the Second Mergen Diyanchi, was found. The Second Mergen Diyanchi studied with the Second Neichi Toyin and came to be the first and the best of his close disciples, as his predecessor had been to the First Neichi Toyin. At the same time, he was still the worshipped lama of Urad Right Duke Banner. In this way, the Mongolian line of practices was able to continue without disruption. All the other six lineages of reincarnations of Mergen Monastery came into existence at the time of the Second Mergen Diyanchi, and all were his disciples. There was no accomplished lama who could have been the master of the Second Mergen Diyanchi. This means, the First Mergen Diyanchi did not, and could not foster a new generation of disciples in Urad Right Duke Banner. The Second Mergen Diyanchi learnt and inherited the First Neichi Toyin's tradition of Mongol practices not only from the Second Neichi Toyin, but also possibly from some of the old disciples of the First Neichi Toyin. Thus, the Mergen Diyanchi who truly transplanted and developed the Neichi Toyin's Mongolian line of practising Buddhism in Urad Right Duke Banner was the Second Mergen Diyanchi rather than the First Mergen Diyanchi. Therefore, the Second Mergen Diyanchi was the actual initiator of the Mongolian line of practising Buddhism in Mergen Monastery. His study of translation skills and other scripts, together with his disciples in Ordos, laid a solid foundation for the later development of the Mongolian line. His training of so many highly-educated scholars played an important role in the Third Mergen Gegen's enormous success in establishing the Mergen Tradition. As will be discussed later, some of his disciples were the very influential teachers of the Third

Mergen Gegen¹⁰⁴. The Second Neichi Toyin and Second Mergen Diyanchi were crucial figures for transplanting the Mongolian line in Mergen Monastery, which was initiated by the First Neichi Toyin. The First Mergen Diyanchi only served as a connection between the two lines.

The Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism was practiced within the territory of Urad Right Duke Banner. Monasteries in the 'brother' banners, Urad Middle Duke Banner and Urad Left Duke Banner, practiced the Tibetan line of Mongolian Buddhism. The most academic monastery in Inner Mongolia, Jibkhulangu or Badgar Monastery (Chi. 五当召 Wu dang zhao) in the territory of Urad Left Duke Banner, was a leading academic monastery in the Tibetan line. Although these three banners were inhabited by people from the same ethnic group, they were divided religiously into two distinct lines of Buddhist practices. There must have been strong reasons for the Mergen Tradition to be able to coexist with the established Tibetan line as its neighbour, particularly given the general religious climate of the whole of Mongolia.

2. Institutionalisation of the Mergen Tradition

Ġaldanwangchugdorji notes 'Before Mergen Gegen's "New Translation" appeared, the First Güüshi Da Baġshi's "old translation and old chanting" had been used' (1994: 179). The First Güüshi Da Baġshi was one of the Second Mergen Diyanchi's disciples summoned to stay in Güng-ün Süm-e, and was known as the great translator and scholar Urad Dharma Samudra (Nomundalai in Mongolian), the author of the biography of the Second Neichi Toyin. As we have seen in the above section, the First Güüshi Da Baġshi Nomundalai had translated a large number of texts from Tibetan among which there were liturgies used in Tashilhunmpo Monastery and monasteries in central Tibet. I assume that most texts used for chanting in Mergen Monastery had been selected from the translations of the above two sets of works by Nomundalai. However, it was by the endeavour of the Third Mergen Gegen that the Mongolian line of Buddhist practices developed into a unique tradition of Mongolian Buddhism. Through Mergen Gegen's

¹⁰⁴ It was after the third reincarnation of the Mergen Diyanchi that all the succeeding reincarnations were called Mergen Gegen. However, the 3rd Mergen Gegen was also called Mergen Düri, meaning 'wise incarnation' because he was highly accomplished, did a lot for formulating the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism by all possible means, and wrote a lot.

institutionalisation, the *diyanchi* tradition turned into a strict monastic order.

ᠠᠭᠳᠠᠨᠠᠩᠴᠢᠭᠳᠣᠷᠵᠢ remarks,

Bogda Toyin Khutuᠭtu-yin Gegen (Neichi Toyin) had bestowed the quintessential instructions for listening, contemplating and meditating to the completely fortunate people in our country in the Mongolian mother tongue and led them to the path of liberation. The Mergen Gegen further promoted the path and made it into a type of practices with new translations and new regulation of services and rituals (DB: 234).

ᠠᠭᠳᠠᠨᠠᠩᠴᠢᠭᠳᠣᠷᠵᠢ frequently takes qualification in Mongolian chanting and regulation of services set by Mergen Gegen as special criteria for appraising the accomplishment of the clergy of Mergen Monastery. For example, ᠠᠭᠳᠠᠨᠠᠩᠴᠢᠭᠳᠣᠷᠵᠢ heard others saying that the Second Chorji Baᠭshi was an outstanding holy person who had strictly held the services and religion exactly as it was newly set out by the Mergen Gegen (DB: 5; 177–185). A clear picture of the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism can be drawn from the complete works of the Third Mergen Gegen. Later practices of the Mergen Tradition essentially follow the programme and regulations set by the Mergen Gegen and used his written works until the communists took over Inner Mongolia. In contemporary times, the monks of Urad Right Duke Banner maintain that the readings they use and their way of chanting originate in the Third Mergen Gegen's renovation of practice (personal conversation with Möngkebatu).¹⁰⁵

Lineage root lama of the Mergen Tradition

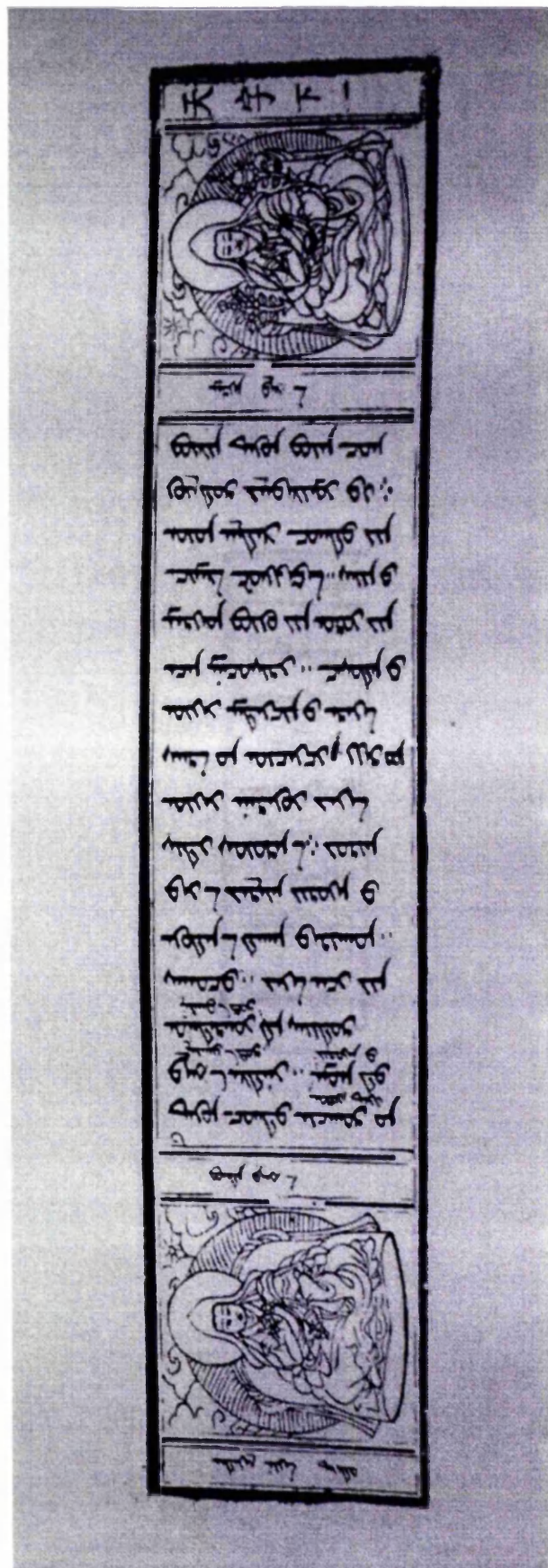
In Mergen Gegen's writing, Neichi Toyin is firmly established as the lineage root lama of the Mergen Tradition. Mergen Gegen calls the Neichi Toyin '*Tegüs choᠭtu lama*' (glorious lama),¹⁰⁶ '*Vajradhara lama*',¹⁰⁷ '*Bogda Lama*' (Holy Lama),¹⁰⁸ 'the Second

¹⁰⁵ Chorji Baᠭshi Möngkebatu is the sixth reincarnation of the Chorji Baᠭshi lineage and present abbot of Mergen Monastery. He has been doing a lot of work to repair the monastery and restore the tradition. Chorji Baᠭshi was invited to the UK by the Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit, University of Cambridge for two weeks in May 2005.

¹⁰⁶ *Tegüs choᠭtu* is usually used to describe the most distinguished Buddhist holy persons, such as Atiśa or Nāgārjuna.

¹⁰⁷ Vajradhara lama refers to one's lineage root lama (guru) or principal lama.

¹⁰⁸ Bogda Lama usually refers to Tsongkhapa, while *Bogda* is added to the titles of the few highest Buddhist dignitaries such as the Dalai Lama, Panchen Lama, Jebtsundamba Khutuᠭtu and Jangjia Khutuᠭtu, in Buddhism. Neichi Toyin is called *bogda lama* in reference to his other title, the Second Tsongkhapa.



Portrait of Neichi Toyin (left) and Mergen Gegen (right) in vol.1, CW2.

Tsongkhapa', 'Mañjuśrī *Boḡda*',¹⁰⁹ and 'Bodhisattva Lama'. All these epithets denote the special position of Neichi Toyin in the Mergen Tradition, as well as the lineage identity of the Mergen Tradition. Some works of the Mergen Gegen are passionately dedicated to the Neichi Toyin. The first two of Mergen Gegen's collected works are about taking refuge, and he mentions Neichi Toyin as the most important refuge. In the first text, 'Reading for taking refuge', he writes, 'I prostrate to you, Vajradhara *Boḡda* Lama. I will follow you, the *Boḡda* Lama, to abandon what is inappropriate, and make what is appropriate until I achieve enlightenment' (CW4, I-1).¹¹⁰ He explains, in the I-2 'Meaning of instructions of taking refuge', why the *Boḡda* Lama should be such a refuge although he was not present in the Tibetan texts of taking refuge, *Boḡda* Lama first disseminated the Yellow Religion in eastern Inner Mongolia. I-3 is a prayer dedicated to Neichi Toyin, titled 'Prayer to the Second Tsongkhapa, his brightness of *Boḡda* Lama'. He relates all kinds of Neichi Toyin's accomplishments: he was more compassionate than all the Buddhas, became *boḡda* in Mongolia, generated Bodhicitta, abandoned the desire for happiness, firmly observed precepts, eliminated faults, completed wisdom and preached all kinds of teachings. At the final phase of the degenerated era, and when religion was in an inadequate state, he disseminated the three trainings (Mon. *gurban surtal*, Tib. *bslab pa gsum*),¹¹¹ transmitted scriptures and insight (*eshi onul*), and shone the essence of the heart of the supreme precious sūtra and tantra among all the people in the Mongolian language. He gave the whole of consecration (*abhiśeka*) of Vajrayana, preached the vajra tantra, gave doctrinal instructions (*ubadis*, Skt. *upadeśa*), and bestowed vajra blessings (*khubi*). Mergen Gegen avows, 'I will worship you on the top of my head in all my life times with your blessings' and requests, 'Bless me to fulfil your order and please your mind.' In the colophon of this text, he asserts himself to be the servant living by the favour of the *Boḡda*.

In I-6, 'Code of Writing', Mergen Gegen stresses again,

While there had been translations of *Kanjur* and *Tanjur*, because of the power of time, teaching and learning of doctrine became distorted. Neichi Toyin came to Mongolia to illuminate the darkness there and made the religion of the Lord Buddha like the sun. He spread widely the doctrine of tantra, the short path, by teaching in our language. Following this custom, readers and watchers, learners

¹⁰⁹ Neichi Toyin may have been called Mañjuśrī *Boḡda* because he was considered to be the Second Tsongkhapa and Tsongkhapa had the special connection to Mañjuśrī.

¹¹⁰ CW4 is abbreviation of the 1997 reprint of Mergen Gegen's collected works *Vchir dhara Mergen Diyanchi blama-yin gegen-ü 'bom jarlig*. I-1 stands for the first text of the first volume of CW4. Only the volume and text numbers are given for references hereafter.

¹¹¹ Three trainings: training in moral discipline, training in concentration and training in wisdom.

and teachers prospered and took the tradition without wasting it (CW4, vol. I: 19v–20r).

Neichi Toyin was mentioned again as *Ejen Boḡda Toyin Khutuḡtu* (Lord Holy Saint Monk of Noble Origin) who initiated the religion of Mongolia and bestowed the benefit of sūtra and tantra in I–7. In I–8, ‘Jewel rosary , various documents designed as instruction to the monks of Öljei badaraḡsan Süm-e’, he asserts, “We are the successors of the master of religion of the Mongols in the east, refuge of beings, liberator Boḡda Neichi Toyin, jewel of brightness” (CW4 vol. I: 26). In I–36, ‘Prayer to the reincarnations [*törül üye*] of the Deliverer Boḡda Lama’, Neichi Toyin is simply called Mañjuśrī and said to be prophesised that he would become Siṃha-nāda Buddha. I–37, as the title signifies: ‘The definite emperor of the power at the top of the standard, the biography of the Mañjuśrī Dalai boḡda Neichi Toyin and the prayer to his three generations with a verse of supplication to remain stable [Mon. *batu orushil*, Tib. *brtan zhugs*]', is a biography written in verse designed for chanting. The content of the biography is basically the same as *DCH*. In I–38, ‘The prayer to the brightness of Lama [*lama-yin gegen*], prayer for longevity [Mon. *ölmei batudkhu*, Tib. *zhabs brtan zhugs pa*, literally, “abiding with firm feet”] of Boḡda Lama, Mergen Gegen says, “For the sake of concern, the name Neichi Toyin is mentioned” CW4 vol. I: 188r). This means that the name Neichi Toyin is mentioned for the sake of evoking him. Otherwise, one normally cannot say the name of such a venerable lama. Indeed the name Neichi Toyin seldom appears in any other texts apart from the biography in the last text. III–1, ‘Prayer to the root lamas of single hero Yamāntaka’ is also dedicated to the Boḡda Lama.

Thus, Neichi Toyin is considered to be founder lineage lama of the Mergen Tradition because he disseminated the Yellow Religion in Mongolia; he disseminated widely the doctrine of tantra, the short path to liberation; and most importantly, he taught the religion in the Mongolian language. Mergen Gegen implies that only Neichi Toyin succeeded in spreading Buddhism in Mongolia. The Buddhism that existed before Neichi Toyin’s arrival is said to have been distorted, perhaps because of the use of Tibetan language and the dominance of Tibetan masters in Mongolia. So, anywhere in Mergen Gegen’s works, when lineage lama is mentioned, *Boḡda Lama*, the First Neichi Toyin is the most important one. Statements such as “I will worship you at the top of my head in all my life times with your blessings”, “May I achieve enlightenment with blessings from you”, ‘May I be the first one who gets *siddhi* when you attain

Buddhahood' appear again and again. It is also noteworthy that Mergen Gegen asserts himself to be 'the servant who lives on the favour of the Bogda Lama.' It is clear that Mergen Gegen did not consider himself belonged to a different tradition from that of Neichi Toyin.

Regulation of monastic practices

Mergen Gegen's first contribution towards the institutionalisation of the Mergen Tradition was that he systematised and regularised all the practices of Mergen Monastery. There are five texts about the regulation of the practices in Mergen Monastery included in the Mergen Gegen's collected works. I-9, 'Text for regulations called the idea of Managing with Internal Harmony' (*Dotugadu eye-ber tükegerekü jüil-ün sanağ-a kemekü dürimlekü bichig*) presents a systematic regulation for administration, precepts, learning, services, and readings in Mergen Monastery. The text relates that the monastery has disseminated Buddhism in all directions by turning the three wheels. They are: 1) Wheel of deeds: lamas and monks observe their vows and do everything in conformation with the rules. 2) Wheel of dhyāna: lamas and monks meditate on the stages of the paths of sūtra and tantra in summer and winter. 3) Wheel of Learning: lamas and monks listen and think about the stages of the path of sūtra and tantra in spring and autumn. The text was written because 'A coherent internal rule is necessary for easy management of religious affairs,' and presents detailed systematic rules for management and services. According to Ġaldanwangchugdorji, there were 24 monasteries in Urad Right Duke Banner which were all conducting services in Mongolian (DB: 229).¹¹² The rules in I-9 were designed for their cohesive management:

Divide all the monasteries into four divisions (*aimağ*). Choose one person from each division to become a manager (*dağagamal*) of the division. Make one of them a major master of discipline (Mon. *gebküi*, Tib. *dge bskos*), one minor master of discipline, two stewards of the monastery at the place of assembly. Choose one person from each division and make one of them a major chant leader (Mon. *umjad*, Tib. *dbu mdzad*), one minor chant leader, two ordinary chant leaders. Appoint one head lama (*terigün lama*), one chair lama (*shiregen lama*) and one deputy lama (*ded lama*). The seats of the head lamas will be arranged according to their learning at the time of teaching, but according to their duty and rank at the time of ritual and assembly. At the other times, they are arranged according to the vows or convention. Under the head lama, appoint

¹¹² Apart from Mergen Monastery which was the Banner Monastery and Barağun Süm-e (West Monastery) or Güng-ün Süm-e (Duke's Monastery), most of the rest were monasteries belonging to the *sumu* under the *Khoshigu* (Banner) and a few were noble's personal monasteries. In addition to the 24 monasteries, there were also some branch monasteries of Mergen Monastery.

two major bursars (*demchi*) and two minor bursars. Place one treasurer (Mon. *nirba*, Tib. *gner-pa*) and one assistant treasurer in every treasury (CW4, vol. I: 54).

Although it was in a strict hereditary aristocratic Mongolian society, this collective administration of about 25 monasteries of the Mergen Tradition was flexible and open as the rule says:

If duration of a position is long, things will become habitual; if too short, one's mind will not be sufficiently used. Chair lamas and deputy lamas serve in nine-year terms; Masters of discipline, chant leaders, treasurers and stewards in seven-year; assistants in five-year terms. If one's personality and performance are good and no suitable one to replace, he can stay for three terms.

However, the positions are appointed by their superiors rather than elected. All the monks in the division are to be registered and recorded about their certificate, position, their social status, and their former occupations, such as soldiers, herders, servants; original banner; fully ordained monks (*gelong*), primarily ordained monks (*getsul*) and novices (*bandi*). The records would be handed in to the head lamas or masters of the relevant disciples. If one is to be excluded from the record, or included in it, the decision is to be made by his lama and master of discipline through discussion. Those who are registered in the record cannot leave as they wish. It is necessary to seek permission from the manager for a three-day leave, from the chair lama for seven days, from the head lama for fifteen days, and more than fifteen days for one to attend a service in another banner (p.56). The text, then relates punishments for not coming back at permitted time, seating arrangements in the service and allocation of share' (ibid: 58). After the rules of administration, the text specifies the readings for annual services, regular services and daily services. The services of the Mergen Tradition are not detailed here but will be discussed in chapter 6.

Then the text presents the precepts in detail. For example, no meat other than dried meat may be included in an assembly meal. No meat can be cooked in the assembly meal pot (*mangjan toguḡ-a*). If it is not for the purpose of meal, animals cannot be slaughtered within the boundary of the monastery. No alcohol is to be kept in the monastery. No woman can stay overnight in the monastery. When necessary, it should be reported to the lama and master of discipline (ibid: 62). After that, the text relates the agenda of the daily routine and activities and relevant discipline in detail. Then, the text continues with a new heading slightly different from the previous section. It is called 'Text for regulations called punishing through internal harmony (*dotuḡadu*

eyeber shidgekü kemekü dürimlekü bichig). Here, the text specifies all kinds of punishment for violation of discipline in detail. The colophon at the end says 'fifteenth year of Qianlong' (1750). This text is a full scale institutionalisation of the monasticism of the Mergen Tradition.

I-10, 'Instruction' (*jakiya bichig*) specifies discipline in the time of assembly and general behaviour or conduct of monks to be maintained. I-11, 'Eight points of teachings' (*surgal*) consists of eight points, as the title indicates, in accordance with the bad behaviour seen in the monastic community. Its colophon states 'This is the order decided by *Lamain gegen* (i.e. Mergen Gegen) and posted at the main hall of the monastery. It was copied on the fourteenth of the second month of the year of the Red Dog, thirty-first year of Qianlong (1766).' This statement shows that the text was copied from the regulation pasted on a wall of the hall after the death of the Third Mergen Gegen in the same year. I-12, 'Programme of chanting in Mergen Monastery services' (*Mergen Süm-e-yin khural-un ungshilg-a-yin temdeg bichig*) is a daily reading programme. It was written on the fifteenth of middle winter month of the year of the Dragon which could be either 1748 or 1760. I-13, 'List of readings in Mergen Monastery services' (*khural*) starts with commenting,

Early elders memorised six eulogies, four wrathful deities, four tantras, five wishing prayers, *sur* (Tib. *zor*), the fire maṇḍalas and a few minor readings which were sufficient for themselves and others, and still did well. Now we talk about memorizing over twenty eulogies, about ten wrathful deities, about ten tantras, several kinds of wishing prayers, several fire maṇḍalas of deed, which can make several volumes altogether, but when checked, the amount really memorised is not even equal to half of those the early elders memorised, and there is always complaining about too much to memorize.

The text gives the minimum number of texts necessary to memorise in order for the monks to hold services in the monastery and for the laities.

The contents of the above five texts overlap, and are lacking consistency. I-9 includes the components of all the other four texts. Therefore, it can be assumed that the other four texts were written individually and chronologically before I-9. They were written in the process of Mergen Gegen's institutionalisation, whereas I-9 was written as the final result of the process and therefore more systematic, consistent and standardised. Comparing the programme in I-12 to the corresponding part of I-9, it is less systematic and less specific. Taking this into consideration, the year of the Dragon in which it was written must be 1748 rather than 1760. I-9 was written two years later, in 1750. I-13

suggests, 'decide separately how to read which texts during great services such as that in the intermediate time (Mon. *jabsar-un khural*) and the New Year aspiration prayer services (Mon. *irügel-ün khural*). However, in I-9, all the texts to be read during these two great services are listed. So, it can be concluded that Mergen Gegen's institutionalisation work was not a simple and straightforward task but a long process of reworking and reformulation; Text I-9 is the highlight of Mergen Gegen's institutionalisation of the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism.

Mergen Gegen's second contribution to the institutionalisation of the Mergen Tradition is his composition of systematic liturgical texts for all the services and practices in Mongolian. His liturgical texts for monastic services include new translations, rewritings and new writings.

Mergen Gegen's renovation of the Mongolian chanting

Apart from Neichi Toyin Line and the Mergen tradition, some other monasteries also conducted their services in Mongolian. According to fragmentary information, Khonichi-yin Monastery in Gobi Mergen Wang Banner and Biligün Monastery in Tüshiye Göng Banner of Khalkha; Tegüs Būritgeltü Monastery in Baḡarin Banner, Jarlig-iyer Keshig-i Shitügchi Monastery in Juu Uda League, and Gegen Monastery of Jarud of Inner Mongolia conducted services in Mongolian (Naranbatu 1997a:72). It is difficult to clarify if the Mongolian chanting in those monasteries, especially in the monasteries of eastern Inner Mongolia, had any connection with Neichi Toyin, the Mergen Tradition, or Mergen Gegen's works.

The focal point of the concern about using Tibetan or Mongolian in religious services is efficacy of the services. Ḡaldanwangchugdorji remarks,

I heard a lot of people say that the blessing of Tibetan scriptures was greater than that of Mongolian ones because the Buddha taught in Sanskrit from which the teachings were translated into Tibetan, and from which it was translated into Mongolian. So the blessings of Mongolian scriptures are less. I think such statements were made inconsiderately by those ridiculous narrow-minded people who have not heard of the saying 'there is no difference between the nature of the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha and all phenomena' (DB: 37).

Mergen Gegen says,

The rules of Tibetan texts originated from Indian scholars, but the Tibetans composed readings by themselves for their chanting and practices. If one has to seek authenticity, there is nothing superior to Sanskrit texts. If you cannot chant in Sanskrit, it is better to have them in your own language (CW4, vol. I: 84).

Believing that the use of Mongolian language in Buddhist practice was not less effective, the Mergen Tradition wanted Buddhism to be more accessible and firmly rooted in the Mongolian society. Mergen Gegen was convinced that the Tibetan Line of Buddhist practices made Buddhism intangible, mysterious and detached from society, it would eventually disappear in Mongolia. In his historical chronology *The Golden Summary*, Mergen Gegen says,

Some nobles and officials in Mongolia nowadays discriminate against all the religious teachings other than Tibetan ones. Although it looks powerful at the moment, it will completely disappear after filling its bags (Mon. *tulum-iyen dügürgeged*)¹¹³ (AD.: 32).

Mergen Gegen found the way the liturgies were conducted by chanting the old literally translated texts in Tibetan tunes in Mergen Monastery was inadequate. He fully expressed his idea about the necessity to standardise Mongolian chanting in I-12, 'Programme of chanting in Mergen Monastery service' (*Mergen Süm-e-yin khural-ungshilg-a-yin temdeg bichig*). The text starts with relating the characteristics of the Mongolian language and writing system, which do not fit Tibetan chanting tunes. So, the old Mongolian chanting sounds like the stammering of tongues and distorted rhythms (CW4, vol. I: 83).

Mergen Gegen made all the liturgical texts suitable, adequate and convenient for chanting in Mongolian language. DB asserts, 'the sage reincarnation (*Mergen Düri*) of the Mergen Gegen the Third, translated all the readings into Mongolian by equalizing the syllables and made them easy for chanting' (DBA: 13). 'Equalizing syllables' means he equalised the number of the syllables in all the lines of a verse. Mergen Gegen possessed all the talent to do so. He is considered to be the most distinguished poet of the era. He initiated a unique 'Mergen Gegen style' in Mongolian poetry (Möngke 1995: 496). His poems show several patterns of 'strict isosyllabic prosody' (Atwood 2004: 147). This characteristic enables the reading and chanting of the poetry to sound smooth and harmonious with even rhymes. Mergen Gegen did so by creatively modifying the more flexible and open patterns of Mongolian traditional poetry while still keeping the most essential characteristics of it.

¹¹³ This statement can be understood, as the Tibetan lamas would disappear after collecting enough alms, which was their purpose of teaching in Mongolia.

Following his innovation of Mongolian poetry, Mergen Gegen composed distinctive Mongolian tunes to match the readings. Mergen Gegen also was musically talented for doing so. People in Urad Right Duke Banner still sing the songs composed by the Third Mergen Gegen. Ġaldanwangchugdorji states, 'When he was initializing the chanting with the new rhythms and melodies, Mergen Gegen seemed a bit discouraged as it was new to the followers, and there were many kinds of people who were familiar with various other rules [of chanting]' (*DBA*: 13). It is beyond my ability to compare Mergen Gegen's Mongolian tunes with Tibetan ones. However, Cheringsodnam, a Mongolian scholar has compared the recordings of some chants of Mergen monastery with the Tibetan chants of Ġandantegchiling, Dashichoiling and West Monasteries in Mongolia, and found they were distinct from the Tibetan tunes. He comments that Mergen Gegen's melodies are so familiar to his ears that they remind him of the melodies and rhythms of Mongolian folk songs and folk poetry recitation. Not only that, the tune of each chant is unique and matches the meaning of the text (Cheringsodnam 2001: 157–165). Thus, Mergen Gegen newly translated some liturgical texts into Mongolian with new poetic patterns and composed Mongolian tunes for chanting. Through such creative work, Mongolian chanting in Mergen Monastery became more indigenous.

Reworking of translated texts

Many of Mergen Gegen's translations are more or less reworking. In the colophon of I–15, 'Liturgy for offering to lama', Mergen Gegen says,

There is a text for the ritual for offering to lama written by the Panchen Lama, which was popular among both Tibetans and Mongols. In addition, there is a Mongolian translation which strictly followed the words and meanings of the original. In fact, there is no need to change it. However, when I try to cut the words of it into even lines, there are interruptions and distortions, and it becomes unclear whether it is Panchen Erdeni's work or not. Therefore, I have made it into Mongolian writing based on the Tibetan original. Then there will be less trouble and they will be easier to read' (*CW4*, vol. I: 94).

In other words, some of his new translations became more like his independent writings rather than translation. Mergen Gegen's reworking extended from the necessity of Mongolian poetic form and tune to the content of a text. Mergen Gegen continues in I–12,

It is good to follow the old tradition. However, nobody with a contesting mind has abandoned the few unnecessary verses such as 'Glorious one' (*tegiis choġtu*) and 'Emptiness of Non-apprehension' (*Jorig ügei*) which were read before 'Taking Refuge' in the early Mongolian line of practices; and nobody with a creative mind has produced at present a few necessary verses like 'Dependent Origination'. Taking unrealistic texts and using them to teach future generations while criticizing predecessors is a questionable activity. One thing is clear that even if Tibetans learnt the doctrine from India, the Tibetan masters did not directly adopt the prayers of the Indian Panditas. Now the Mongols take the prayers of Tibetan scholars (*ubadini*)¹¹⁴ to be supreme of all the liturgical manuals and cause trouble of endless dull memorizing. This imitation needs to be examined' (ibid: 83–85).

This means that people at that time were just mechanically following the literal translations without considering omitting components of the original Tibetan text that were irrelevant for their practices, and similarly did not consider adding other useful passages according to their needs. In doing so, they were also blaming their predecessors for memorizing those irrelevant elements while still teaching it to the next generations.

Mergen Gegen compiled some works by including translations of relevant episodes from other people's works. Mergen Gegen expressed his idea about the necessity of such compilations in I–12 saying,

Tibetans did not just adopt the prayers of the Indian scholars even if the doctrine came from India. Mongols nowadays always highly esteem the prayers of Tibetan masters. It is really worth questioning the difficulties for endless memorisation because of this convention. Of course, it is best if intelligent people can memorise Kanjur and Tanjur. However, for everyday chanting in the services, as there have been no ready readings, it is hard for young monks to memorise all kinds of those borrowed texts (ibid: I2–14).

So Mergen Gegen simplified the texts as much as possible. I–1, 'Reading for taking refuge' is such a work with its own distinctive features. Mergen Gegen acknowledges, wherever relevant, which part is from Atiśa's work, which is from Vajra Guru Tantra, and which is from Yoga Tantra. III–9, 'Readings for offering sacrificial cakes for the external meditation on the oath-bound king of doctrine' (*tangġarigtü nom-un khagan*) is a text compiled on such a basis. Mergen Gegen draw from writings of a number of scholars, for instance, Tsongkhapa, Lalitavajra, Dalai Lama Gendunjamsu (dGe 'dun rgya mtsho), Lama Umapa and Panchen Sumadi Dharma Dhvaja. At the end of the text, Mergen Gegen asks the King of Doctrine to forgive him, because there must be mistakes when thus writing Mongolian verses that have not existed before.

¹¹⁴ Here Mergen Gegen used *ubadini*, which is Sanskrit *Upādhāya*. I chose 'scholar' from the many meanings given by Chandra Das (1902: 179).

Composition of new texts

Through the experience of his new translations, Mergen Gegen concluded that it would be better to write his own texts as much as possible. In I-6, 'Code of writing', he states,

Some people who seek interesting things esteem Tibetan and change and modify Mongolian words and style which diverges translation and tune. No matter how much corrections are made again and again to such translations, there are still things to be corrected, and chanting rules are still Tibetan that leads to a mixture. Even if Tibetans had treatises like Tanjur translated from India, they still wrote in their own language [...]. Most of their liturgical texts are also Tibetan writing. They rarely use Indian. If we Mongols write in our own language, the trouble of changing the translation again and again will be reduced' (CW4, vol. I: 20).

Mergen Gegen also wrote his own text instead of translated texts which were too rigid for chanting. Text number I-36 to I-52 is prayers and Supplication to Remain Stable to various lamas relevant to the Mergen Tradition.

Another of Mergen Gegen's contribution is his popularisation of Buddhism and integration of the lay community into the Mergen Tradition. This aspect of his work can be divided into two categories. One is his texts for popular rituals, in which he mingled traditional Mongolian folk literature with Buddhist liturgical patterns. In such a way, on the one hand, Mergen Gegen infused Buddhist doctrine into the minds of lay people and, on the other hand, he amalgamated Buddhist character into popular rituals. The other is his popular literature. He tried to enlighten and improve the quality of the whole community by his various genres of works of popular knowledge. Many of such works of popular literature have been passed down to the present day through word of mouth and are still popular among Urad people (see Chapter 7).

To conclude, Mergen Gegen is the key figure who transformed the Mongolian line of Buddhist practices initiated by Neichi Toyin into the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism which also included the whole of Urad society. Mergen Gegen possibly hoped that the Mongolian Buddhism he institutionalised would reach the whole Mongolian nation. He may have thought that the establishment of such a solid Mongolian Buddhism was vital because he believed that the Tibetan line would completely disappear in Mongolia sooner or later. Certainly, he had already taken action to spread his programme to be practiced among the far away Khorchins in eastern Mongolia (see Chapter 5).

3. Mergen Gegen's Collected Works

Pozdneyev notes: 'Buddhist prayer books are known among the Mongols by their Tibetan name, "gsung 'bum", and mostly are in the form of manuscripts and read in Tibetan in the idol-temples. However, in the Setsen Khan Aimak, in the Toktokho Törü Khoshuun, divine services are performed in Mongolian, and for this purpose the lamas of that khoshuun use the Janja Khutuḡtu's *gsung 'bum*, translated from Tibetan into Mongolian and published in Beijing' (Pozdneyev 1978: 401). Pozdneyev did mention the *gsung 'bum* of Mergen Diyanchi, but surprisingly, he included it in the list of Tibetan *gsung 'bum*. He did not mention whether it was in Mongolian or it was used in any monasteries. There has never been any Tibetan translation of Mergen Diyanchi's collected works. In fact, Pozdneyev referred to Mergen Diyanchi's collected works for his own work, and it was obviously in Mongolian (see Chapter 6).

There are four sets of collected works obtained so far under the authorship of the Third Mergen Gegen Lobsangdambijalsan. These works range from readings for monastic services, manuals regarding all aspects of religious practices and works for popular rituals and popular teachings of Buddhist knowledge among the lay community. The four sets of collected works are following in chronological order of their publications.

CWI (Collected Works 1), *Öljei badaraḡsan süm-e-dür vchir dhara Mergen Diyanchi Blama-yin gegen-ber gol-un aman-u ungshilḡ-a bolgan toḡtagaḡsan nom-un yabudal mashi todurkhai gegen oyutan-u khoḡulai-yin chimeḡ chindamani-yin erike* (Wishing stone rosary, the ornament of throat of the bright minded people, a very clear liturgical manual designed for the services of the Öljei Badaraḡsan Süm-e¹¹⁵ by Vajradhara Mergen Diyanchi Blama-yin Gegen) contains 80 texts, printed in Beijing in 1774. The colophon relates how Mergen Gegen personally had given the collected works to the chair Da Lama Lobsangsabdan of Öljei Badaraḡsan Süm-e (see Chapter 5). The blocks of the print were well blessed and kept in the Yongli hao bookstore inside Qian

¹¹⁵ Öljei Badaraḡsan Süm-e was a monastery in Khorchin Left Hand Middle Banner (also known as Darkhan Banner). Text I—8 in CW2 was dedicated to this monastery. The colophon states that the text was written at the request of *gebküi* of Öljei Badaraḡsan Süm-e that was newly built by Khoshui Jorigtu Qin Wang (Imperial Prince of the First Rank) of Khorchin. This title was an inherited title of the ruling prince of the banner. According to *Jirim-ün Süm-e Keid*, a monastery called Öljei Badarḡulku Süm-e was built in Bayan-öndür, Bayantal-a district, Darkhan Banner, in the 46th year of Kangxi (1707). 182 monks resided in it and possessed two pieces of farm land and two pieces of pasture land. It was destroyed in 1947 (Kürelsha 1993: 395). However, the date when the statistics was made is not given.

Men gate with permission of Jangjia Khutuḡtu. The scribe was Gelong Loroi Dorji of Manchu School, from the banner of Khorchin prince Chimeddorji¹¹⁶.

CW2, Vchir dhara Mergen Diyanchi Blama-yin gegen-ü 'bom jarlig (Collected works of the reincarnation of Vajradhara Mergen Diyanchi Lama) is a four-volume collected works containing 138 texts, printed in Beijing in 1783. The colophon states,

In the 45th year of Qianlong [1780], Süstüḡtū Chorji Lobsangsabdan, Shanbi gelong gebküi Lobsang shis rab and Lobsang Delig sought permission from the Holy Jangjia Khutuḡtu¹¹⁷ to print the works by the reincarnation of Vajradhara Mergen Diyanchi Lama. Jangjia Khutuḡtu gave permission and bestowed a certificate for a block print. So, the works were handed over to the Boss Li of Yongli Hao book store. There are 138 texts, 1300 leaves of paper, 4 volumes with two Buddha images in the beginning and five images in the end. The price for the block print is 140 *lang*. The block print was completed on the 10th of the first month of the forty-eighth year of Qianlong [1783], which was the birthday of Jangjia Khutuḡtu and the block print was consecrated and infused with blessings by the Jangjia Khutuḡtu. The scribe was Lobsang shis rab. The block print was handed in to Boss Li of Yongli bookstore.

The four volumes are divided by subjects. Each volume has its list of contents in the beginning. Complete copies of these two sets of collected works are held in British Library.

CW3, Mergen Gegen Lobsangdambijalsan-ü 'bom jarlig kemegdekü orusiba (Collected works of Mergen Gegen Lobsangdambijalsan) is a new volume of collected works of the Third Mergen Gegen by Galluu¹¹⁸ and Jirantai, published by Nationalities' Press in Beijing in 1986. It is said in the collectors' preface that most of the works were provided by the eighth Mergen Gegen Ġalsangdambijalsan¹¹⁹, Master Oruwa, who used to be the chant leader and Da Lama of Mergen Monastery, and other people who had been or used to be monks in Mergen Monastery and other attached monasteries. They also used the works held in the Library of Inner Mongolia Social Academy and Inner Mongolia Library, and collected some works from folk singers and ordinary local lay people. The works in this collection are divided into thirteen categories:

I. Poetry and songs

¹¹⁶ The banner of prince Chimeddorji refers to the Khorchin Left Hand North Banner.

¹¹⁷ This should be the Third Jangjia Khutuḡtu Rolbidorji (1717–1786).

¹¹⁸ Galluu used to be a monk in Mergen Monastery before the revolution and was a teacher after the revolution. After retiring he returned to the monastery to serve as a chant leader for some time, and currently he is trying to spread the Mergen Tradition of Buddhist practice in Mongolia.

¹¹⁹ The Eighth Mergen Gegen Ġalsangdambijalsan (1898–1971) was also very accomplished in the doctrine and practising medicine. He had been the standing council member of the Chinese Buddhist association, head of the Inner Mongolian Buddhist association and member of Chinese People's Congress, standing member and deputy director of Inner Mongolian committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

- II. Didactic poetry
- III. Textbooks
- IV. Prayers
- V. Eulogies
- VI. Readings for incense offering
- VII. Confession
- VIII. Offerings
- IX. Ablution
- X. Averting adverse forces
- XI. Beckoning prosperity
- XII. Miscellaneous
- XIII. Additional readings to the prayers

CW4, Vchir dhara Mergen Diyanchi Blama-yin Gegen-ü 'bom jarlig (Collected Works of the reincarnation of Vajradhara Mergen Diyanchi Lama) is a photographed edition of *CW2* plus a computerised volume of nine texts published by Inner Mongolia Educational press. This version also includes four cassettes of chanting selected from Mergen Gegen's works recorded by the monks of Mergen Monastery in 1997. There are also music scores for the chanting of 108 texts. It is said in the 'Note' at the end of this edition that when a committee for 'Mergen Gegen Studies' was organised by Professor Ü. Naranbatu and a plan to publish selected works of Mergen Gegen was carried out, Professor Hasumi Haru-u, a Japanese scholar and G. Bağatur, a young Mongol scholar who was studying in Japan each sent a copy of the *CW2* to the committee and Mergen Monastery respectively¹²⁰ in 1997. Therefore, the committee gave up the original plan and prepared the current edition. The nine texts in the 5th volume were obtained from either the monks of Mergen Monastery or the libraries in Inner Mongolia. They were offprint from the same time as the *CW2*. They are considered to be indispensable texts used in present day Mergen Monastery services.

WC2 is the primary set of works and all the others can be seen as variations and supplements of it. For instance, *WC1* is a selected version of it, *WC4* is a reprint of it with some additions and *WC3* is the supplement to it.

¹²⁰Both of Hasumi and Bağatur's copies came from the same source deposited in the British Library, in 1868.

However, it is confusing that the names of several different authors appear in the colophons of some texts while most texts have no colophon and the entire collected works were printed under the name of the Third Mergen Gegen. The names given are Jamsan (*Ütele* Jamsan), Rgyal mtshan, Bstan rgyan (Urad gelong), Blo bstan rgyan, Urad gelong Blo bstan rgyan, Chimeg, Lobsang Danjin and Mergen Lama. Because of these different names, some people suspect that other people's works are included in the collection. In fact, all these names are different variations of Lobsangdambijalsan (Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan), the most popularly known name of the Third Mergen Gegen. Let us look at the names:

1. Rgyal mtshan is the last part and main element of Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan. Jamsan is a Mongolian pronunciation of Rgyal mtshan where 'Rgya' is pronounced 'ja', 'l' of 'rgyal' is replaced by 'm' of 'mtshan' and forms 'jam'. 'tshan' is pronounced as 'san' because there is no 'ts', 'tsh' and 'dz' sounds in Mongolian and they are all pronounced as 's'. The colophon of Text IV-6 notes 'Jamsan wrote on fifteenth of middle autumn month of the 25th year of Qianlong', which is 1760. This also matches the lifetime of the Third Mergen Gegen (1717-1766).

2. 'Bstan rgyan' can be seen as the synonymous alternation of the core meaning of 'Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan' because 'rgyan' means 'ornament' or 'decoration'. 'Rgyal mtshan' means 'banner of victory' that is also seen as a decoration. In 'Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan', the 'rgyal mtshan' is the decoration of the doctrine 'bstan pa'. Therefore, 'Bstan rgyan' still means decoration of doctrine. 'Bstan rgyan' appears in the colophon of text I-37 which contains a prayer to the three generations of Neichi Toyin. The Third Neichi Toyin lived between 1710 and 1768 almost the same time as the Third Mergen Gegen (1717-1766). This is further evidenced by colophon of texts I-41 and I-42 of which the author is also given as 'Urad Gelong Bstan rgyan'. These two texts contain a supplication to remain stable and a prayer to Khubilgan Lama. According to *DB*, the First Khubilgan Lama was living around 1750, but the second was the youngest disciple of the Third Mergen Gegen. Therefore, the Third Mergen Gegen wrote text I-41, supplication to remain stable of the young Khubilgan Lama and the prayer to the first one after his death.

3. 'Chimeg' appears only once in text I-21, which is a Mongolian word, means ornament or decoration. Therefore, 'Chimeg' is the Mongolian alternation of 'Rgyal mtshan'. So it still refers to the Third Mergen Gegen.

4. 'Blo bstan rgyan' is an extension of 'Bstan rgyan' by keeping the first syllable 'Blo' of the whole name.

5. 'Lobsang Danjin' can be understood as a synonym of 'Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan' because 'Danjin' is Mongolian pronunciation of 'Bstan rgyan' with the same sound change of 'rgy' to 'j'. Change of 'a' to 'i' is more frequent.

6. 'Ütele' is a Mongolian word meaning 'ordinary' 'unaccomplished', which is often added before 'Jamsan', and sometimes also before either 'Bstan rgyan' or 'Blo bstan rgyan' to show humility.

7. The addition of 'Urad gelong' to 'Bstan rgyan' and 'Blo bstan rgyan' provides further evidence that they are the Third Mergen Gegen. As seen before, Mergen Gegen went to Dolon-nuur to take the *gelong* vow.

8. Comparing individual texts with all these different names, the writing style, equalised verse and language use appear to be the same. For example, the author of text I-37, Biography of Neichi Toyin and the prayer to his three reincarnations with a verse of supplication to remain stable was 'Bstan rgyan' and I-38, a prayer to the Neichi Toyin was by Jamsan. In comparison, both of them are in same patterned verses and they both contain the same components or even the same verses and same language. They are in four-line verses with five words in each line. Two of the verses in I-37 also appear separately in I-38. Those read:

*Üni-eche egüsügen chinü erkin sedkil ba,
Ünen gurban erdenis-ün nigülesküi-yin küchüber,
Ürüshiyen aburağchyin ölmei batu orushin,
Üile- anu arban jüg-tür delgerekü boltuğai.*

*Tere metü getülgegchi boğda- blama chimadur,
Temdegtey-e jalbarigsan buyan-iyer boğul bi,
Tegüs choğtu blama chinu adistid-un shim-e-ber,
Tedgügdejü yeke bodi-yin oldaburitu boltuğai.¹²¹*

With your mind that was generated long ago,
And the power of the compassion of the Three Jewels,

¹²¹ Each line is cut by two dots and each verse is cut by four dots arranged in rhombus shape in both texts.

May you long live, the compassionate saviour,
 May your course of deeds spread in ten directions.
 With the merit of thus praying,
 To you, the delivering *boḡda* Lama,
 May I be nourished with your blessing,
 And achieve great enlightenment.

The phrase *jalbarimu adisla* meaning '(I am) praying (to you), (please) bless (me)' is repeatedly used in both texts. This is an evidence of the identity of the most divergent two names.

The name 'Toyin Gendunjamsu' appears only once in text III-18 '*Yeke qaḡan wayisirawani dur takil baling ergüküin jerge sidi-yin küü sang kemekü-yi tüsiglen yekengki badaḡ üges-i tegsidgegsen kemegdekü orusiba*' (A text called even-lined verses based on 'The treasury of power (*siddhi*) for sacrificial cake offering to the great king Vaiśravaṇa) in CW2. It was mistakenly identified with the Second Dalai Lama by contemporary scholars (Ürinkiraḡ-a 1999: 615). Gendunjamsu can still be the Third Mergen Gegen.

It can be seen from the title that this text is compiled on the basis of 'The treasury of shidhi' by the Panchen Lama by equalising the syllables in the lines of each stanza. The pattern of the stanzas is quite similar to the other texts. From the colophon, the author seems to be doing such a 'new translation' for the first time in order to make it easy for everyday use at the request of someone called Loroijamsu. There are many explanations given about the benefits of such a 'new translation' and very humble apology for any mistakes of doing so. It seems to be a first attempt. So, it can be assumed that this text is the Third Mergen Gegen's early work when he had a different name, perhaps before taking the *gelong* vows. It can also be presumed that the third Mergen Diyanchi was named Gendunjamsu following the Second Mergen Diyanchi, called Danjinjamsu, and preceding the fourth, named Lobsangdanjinjamsu (Blo bzang bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho). He might have given the name Lobsangdanbijalsan when he took the *gelong* vow and became famous as Lobsangdanbijalsan. With respect to 'Toyin' (of noble birth), there is no evidence to prove or reject the noble birth of the Third Mergen Gegen¹²² and it does not affect the identity of the author as it is rather a title than

¹²² A two-volume book titled *Mongḡul-iyer delgeregüligsen burkhan shashin-u nom soyul uralig-un teüke* (History of doctrine, culture and art of Buddhism practised in Mongolian) by S. Galluu was

a name. So, all the works in *CW1* *CW2* and *CW4* without doubt are the Third Mergen Gegen's works. Those in *CW3* should be used by further verifying individually.

Pozdneyev divided 'the prayer books' into three parts according to which the Mongols perform their services:

1. *Rabsals* (Tib. *rab-gsal*, Mon. *mashi gegen*). *Rabsals* comprises a collection of sacred hymns in honour of Buddha, such as: a) '*kharangu*' (Mon. *öber-ün aman-u bishilgal*), a confession of faith on the part of the supplicant, b) *magtagal*, hymns of eulogy, c) *jalbaril*, prayers in the full sense of the word, with a statement of petitions, d) *irügel*, well wishes and benedictions.

2. Texts pertaining to divine services called *dogshid* (Tib. *drag gshed*), *kilingten* (wrathful deities), *nom tedkügchi* (Tib. *chos skyong*, Skt. Dharmapāla) and *sakgigulsun* (spirits) according to the deities and gods to whom the services were dedicated.

3. The four tantras.

The first four volumes of *CW4* (originally *CW2*) are divided similarly with more categories. The texts in Vol. I correspond to *rabsals*, those in Vol. III are equivalent to *dogshid*. However, the texts in Vol. II are particular to Mergen Gegen's works, which are all about Vajrabhairava Tantra. The texts in Vol. IV are on other tantras and miscellaneous subjects.

Mergen Gegen's works have crossed the border of the Mergen Tradition and were widely disseminated throughout Mongolia in the past. It is evident that Mergen Gegen's collected works that were printed in the 1783 were well-known even among the Khalkha Mongols at the end of 19th century (Pozdneyev 1978:402). Mergen Gegen's old collected works have been reprinted recently, all his other works handed down in offprint, manuscripts, and oral practices also have been published. This provides comprehensive and accessible sources for both academic studies and actual practices of Mongolian Buddhism.

4. The Chronicle *Altan Tobchi*

Apart from the above-mentioned works, Mergen Gegen is thought to have written a chronicle titled *Altan Tobchi* (Golden summary).

Along with the growth of Buddhist intellectual and literary culture in the 17–18th centuries, Mongolian history writing also prospered. Most of the chronicles in this period were written by learned lamas. These chronicles invariably linked the lineage of Chinggis Khan to that of Indian and Tibetan kings. Such works always start by describing the formation of the world, then giving the genealogy of the Indian kings, which starts with Mahāsaṃmata, followed by that of Tibetan kings, and then Mongolian kings (Bulaḡ 1993: 168). “In these works, the ancestral figure of Börte Chino—the ‘blue-grey wolf’ named as Chinggis Khan’s first ancestor in the thirteenth-century Secret History—was transformed into a Tibetan prince with genealogical links to the sacred centres of Buddhism in India” (Elverskog 2006: 96). The *Altan Tobchi* is no exception in this respect.

Another similarity of the *Altan Tobchi* with other chronicles is the detailed genealogy of local nobles. However, *Altan Tobchi* is unique in the particular prominence it gives to the deeds of Khasar, one of Chinggis Khan’s brothers, and the genealogy of the nobles of Khorchin, Urad Muuminggan, Aru Khorchin, Dörben Keüked and even Ögeled and Torḡud nobles in Kökenuur, all of whom are considered to be descendants of Khasar. In fact, Khasar is described as more able than Chinggis Khan is, and as having more merits than Chinggis Khan has for building the empire. The major events carried out by Chinggis Khan in the *Secret History* are attributed to Khasar, or accomplished jointly by Chinggis Khan and Khasar. For example, Khasar was born clutching a clot of blood in his hand (AT: 51) instead of Temüjin (De Rachewiltz 2004: 13); Khasar conquered the major tribes such as Taichigud, Kereid and Naiman, and many places in China (AT: 55–62). Temüjin and Khasar were captured together by their enemy from whom they escaped and hid in the water (AT: 50; De Rachewiltz 2004: 23–26); Temüjin and Khasar chased after the thieves who stole their eight light bay horses (AT: 51; De Rachewiltz 2004: 27–28). *Altan Tobchi* gives no general historical account of after Chinggis Khan’s demise apart from sections relating the stories of Khasar’s descendants, of the Mongol conversion to Buddhism, and of submission to Manchu.

Altan Tobchi brings together the extraordinary ancestor Khasar's numerous descendants, who spread widely and had unusual experiences.

According to the colophon, *Altan Tobchi* was written under the request of someone superior (AT: 93). It seems the purpose of both the requester and the author was the same. The colophon says,

It is unbearable to bow [my] honest and etiquette head down to those superiors who undervalue the state and religion; put profits before vows; break away from their own lineage and devalue their root, esteem trickery and fill their sacks of karma with intimidation and despotic power...although I am discouraged to write a genealogy which targets at the phenomenon that devalue their gold and silver like lineage but value iron and copper like relatives [by marriage]. I still write it because it is not easy to fulfil, but at the same time difficult to disobey the order of a superior.

The author then apologises for possible mistakes and asks for the forgiveness of wise people and superiors. Then he bitterly scorns those who do not recognise their lineage, who not only do not appreciate his writing but also maliciously attack him. He also says he wrote this because he cannot stand becoming mediocre [old] and of no use (ibid: 92–93). This shows that the reason of writing *Altan Tobchi* was because some people of Khasar lineage might have overvalued the relatives by marriage (maybe Manchu) over those of their own lineage. Then the author makes a wish, saying, “May the people who were born to this lineage have all the favourable conditions for power and intelligence;, may they do not fall into the deceitful trait but genuinely achieve righteous quality and strive to do their bits to the religion and the state.” The state in his words is a peaceful one, where the lord and the masses rejoice in a way of a true state. The religion he refers to is the Holy Lama's (Neichi Toyin) extraordinary Mongolian Religion of instruction and realisation” (AT: 93-94).

Elverskog points out,

Buddhist conversion has historically been enacted on a group level, as with the ummah in Islam, and thus narratives of this process invariably entail the production or redefinition of a new religious and often political community. Histories of Buddhist conversion thus often involve reconceptualizations of community ethnogenesis in order to transform the boundaries of communal identification (Elverskog 2006: 12).

As a highly learned lama, Mergen Gegen's ultimate motivation for writing *Altan Tobchi*—a secular history, or more precisely a genealogy of Khasar's lineage—was to construct a wider community base for popularising Neichi Toyin's Mongolian Religion (

selected works given to the head lama of the Öljei Badaraḡsan Süm-e of Khorchin; see Chapter 5.4). All the Khasarids who were connected through the genealogy he provided had good reason to accept Neichi Toyin's religion because Neichi Toyin not only was from Torgud, but also because he spread Buddhism among other Khasarid groups such as the Muuminggan, Urad and Khorchin.

This formulation of community is quite different from what other Mongolian chronicles of the 18th century reveal, that is a united Mongolian identity under either the national flag of Chinggis Khan or the imperial grace of Buddhist Qing (Elverskog 2006: 73). However, it does not necessarily mean that Mergen Gegen wanted to deny Chinggis Khan, reject the Mongolian nation or disregard other Mongols. It was impossible for him to advance his tradition of Buddhism among the ungrounded Mongol *ulus* united through Chinggis Khan Cult, which was merely a means of Qing transformation of Mongolian identity (Elverskog 2006: 63–89). He held a strong conviction that the Tibetan line of Buddhism that was promoted all over Mongolia by the Manchu state could not be future of Mongolian Buddhism. He says in *Altan Tobchi*, “Some Mongolian nobles and officials nowadays discriminate against all the teachings other than Tibetan ones. Although it looks powerful at the moment, it will disappear without trace after filling its sack” (AT: 32).

Mergen Gegen might have believed that as long as his tradition was able to spread among all the Khasarids who were influential and in the majority at that time, it could be expanded all over Mongolia someday. That is why he says in the end of *Altan Tobchi*,

May the unusual Mongolian Religion with the Bogda Gegen's instructions and realisation prosper all the time. With the blessings of the holy Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and saints, grace of the mighty heaven and earth, and the merit and fortune made by the lords, khans, nobles and commoners, may we Mongols abandon our crafty sinful disposition and firmly identify our nature with the book ¹²³ and become the solid containers of truthfulness and honesty (AT: 94).

Mergen Gegen actually hopes his practice can spread among all the Mongols who can come together around Khasarids. He wants to convince all Mongols that Khasar could have been a great khan equal to Chinggis, and could still be a centre for unity.

123 'Book' may refer to *Altan Tobchi*.

As for the relationship of 'state and religion' (Mergen Gegen also alternates the sequence of the two as 'religion and state'), there is no open denial of the Manchu Qing state. On the contrary, he mentions the Manchu very favourably. He writes,

The Manchu lord Nurhachi gave an order to make the ten banners of Khorchin, Gorlus, Jalayid, Dörbed, three banners of Urad, Muuminggan, Aru Khorchin, Dörben Keiked, the nobles of sixteen banners all together a clan (*obug*) in 1617. And intermarriage among them was strictly banned by law. If so, Ögeled and Torgud of Kökenuur should also belong to the same clan (AT: 69).

He warns, "if the people who received the grace and peaceful culture of the Great Qing state generation after generation disregard it and act as they wish, they will be tripped up" (ibid.: 87). He also advises the Khasarids to be grateful for the opportunity and good fortune to have continued their lineage from the holy Khasar until then without fault, and reminds them that they depend on the Great Qing State for their noble titles (ibid: 87).

So, Mergen Gegen's ideal of initially spreading his religion among the Khasarids was not to construct a new state of Khasarids but to unite them under the Manchu Qing. In this case, he might not have realised the underlying reason for the First Neichi Toyin's exile from the Khorchin.

CHAPTER 5. Internal and external relations of the Mergen Tradition

1. Internal guru disciple relationship

It was quite extraordinary for Mergen Monastery, a banner level monastery, to have had seven lineages of reincarnations. They were Mergen Gegen, Chorji Baḡshi, Da Baḡshi, Khubilḡan Lamakhai, Gūūshi Da Baḡshi, Rasang Lama, and Emchi Lama. Local people also seem to have been aware that they had too many locally recognised reincarnations.

DB gives an interesting reasons and legitimacy for the local reincarnations.

It is said in discourse of the saints of the Western Juu (Tibet), “there are indeed reincarnations in Mongolia. It is, in fact, not so easy to relate one’s last life [to be recognised as a reincarnation]. It is heard that the place of Wutai is near there. As Mongols are compassionate and zealous believers, they make pilgrimage there. As a result, their bad karma was reduced and more and more people can relate their last lives. So, it is all because of the favour of Mañjuśrī¹²⁴. It is said that not only human beings, but even animals that have been to Wutai can be liberated”(DB: 36).

Although this is given in the voice of Tibetans, in fact it is the local people’s belief and interpretation about the numerous local reincarnations. They thought it was all because of their location being close to Wutai Mountain, on which Mañjuśrī resided.

It seemed that the local recognition of reincarnations alarmed the higher authorities which caused problems. According to an archival source, the deputy head of Ulaanchab League¹²⁵ who was also the ruling duke of Urad Right Duke Banner, and other nobles of the banner wrote a report about the locally recognised reincarnations in a booklet which gave their details to Li Fan Yuan in 1793. The report argues that there were no unofficial reincarnations in the banner and that there were only three locally recognised reincarnations who were installed by reporting to the Li Fan Yuan through the state teacher Jangjia Khutuḡtu (Altanorgil 1998: 245). Although no material is available, it can be assumed that there had been an accusation about the excessiveness of reincarnations in the Mergen Monastery and the report was a response to the accusations. It also demonstrates that the most of the reincarnations of Mergen Monastery were locally recognised and they were not officially recognised by the Manchu court and Tibetan Buddhist authorities. It means that people’s faith towards

¹²⁴ Wutai Mountain is known as the residence of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.

¹²⁵ This is Batuvchir, father of Ḡaldanwangchugḡdorji, the author of *DB*, who also held the position of deputy head of Ulaanchab League when he was ruling duke of Urad Right Duke Banner.

their reincarnations was not affected by the absence of Manchu and Tibetan recognition. Unlike the great Khutuḡtus who were recognised by either Manchu state or Tibetan Buddhist authorities usually were either reincarnations of Buddhist deities, Indian mystics (siddhas), Śākyamuni Buddha's disciples or prominent Tibetan lamas described in Chapter 2, the locally installed reincarnations were mostly those of locally influential Mongolian lamas who were distinguished in certain skills or knowledge of Buddhism. Their titles were often those of the minor reincarnations such as Chorji, Gūūshi and Khubilḡan, or even no titles designated for reincarnations, but only called by their professions or positions, such as Emchi Lama (Medical Doctor Lama), Da Baḡshi (head teacher) and Rasang Lama. Gegen was the highest reincarnation in the Mergen Monastery.

Apart from the Mergen Gegen whose origin was already discussed above, and Rasang Lama whose origin is not known, five of these seven lineages of reincarnations originated from the Second Mergen Diyanchi's disciples as recorded in *DB* seen in Chapter 4. They were the first Chorji Baḡshi, Baraḡun Da Baḡshi, Khubilḡan Da Lamakhai, Gūūshi Da Baḡshi and Emchi Lama who came to stay in Gūng-ūn Sūm-e following the order of their master, the Second Mergen Diyanchi. While staying there, the disciples built their own monasteries and temples, images of Buddhas and other objects of worship, set their own religious assemblages, built their own departments, took their own disciples and patrons respectively. Still they all aided the Mergen Gegen's religious services (*DB*: 228).

DB provides the Khubilḡan Da Lamakhai's example of establishing his own monastery by renewing Chagan Khota-yin Sūm-e which was one of the 24 subordinate monasteries of Mergen Monastery. The Second Khubilḡan Lamakhai was also installed there. Talking about the lamas' position in Mergen Monastery, *DB* states,

It is recorded in the original record of Mergen [Monastery] that in the third year of [Emperor] Young Zheng [1725] the year of the snake, Chorji Baḡshi, Khubilḡan Lamakhai and the Da Lama of the Banner cooperated to build seven *jang*¹²⁶ extension to monastery and completed it in the year of horse [1726]. That is why these three lamas have special positions in Mergen Monastery (*DB*: 193).

¹²⁶ *Jang* 丈 is a Chinese measurement. One *jang* equals 3½ metres. One *jang* of house occupies approximately one square *jang* of area.

Not only the seven lineages of reincarnations of Mergen Monastery were initiated locally, but also their successive reincarnations have always been found among Urad Mongols, except a few from Minggan Banner and Khorchin who still were related to Urads. The limited information about these seven lineages of reincarnations is found in *DB*.

Mergen Gegen lineage

As mentioned, the First Mergen Diyanchi was appointed to the Duke Nomun by the First Neichi Toyin as a lama to be worshipped. This is the first reach of the Mongol Line of Buddhism in Urad Right Duke Banner. There is no other information about his activities and death. He might have died not long after. Then the Second Mergen Diyanchi was found and installed by the sixth Duke Darmadai. He studied with the Second Neichi Toyin and became very accomplished. After the Second Neichi Toyin died, the Second Mergen Diyanchi was installed by the seventh Duke, Darmashiri of the Urad Right Duke Banner to his newly built Mergen Monastery. He was the individual to have established the Mongol line of Buddhist practices in Mergen Monastery by bringing together all his disciples to Güng-ün Süm-e of Urad Right Duke Banner.

The third reincarnation of Mergen Diyanchi Lama was born into the family of a man called Lobjang of the Urad Middle Duke Banner and was installed in 1721 by the same Duke Darmashiri with the approval of the Seventh Dalai Lama and the Fifth Panchen Lama. It is important to note here that the third Mergen Diyanchi was recognised and confirmed by the Tibetan authorities. This was the renowned *Mergen Düri* (Sage Incarnation), Mergen Gegen Lobsangdambijalsan (Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan). He died in 1766 and his relics were deposited in a copper box inside a silver stūpa and then placed in a specially built temple. It seems that the designation of 'Mergen Gegen' started from this third reincarnation. The first generation was called Mergen Diyanchi Dinu-a and the second was called Mergen Diyanchi-yin Gegen (reincarnation of the Mergen Diyanchi), and only occasionally called Mergen Gegen. So, when Mergen Gegen is used in this thesis without other modifier, it refers to the Third Mergen Gegen Lobsangdambijalsan exclusively, who is the focus of the thesis. The fourth Mergen Diyanchi Lobsangdanjinjamsu (Blo bzang bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho) was born to Sonomrabdan, the ruling Duke of Urad Left Duke Banner in the thirty-seventh year of Qianlong (1772). He was installed by the ninth Duke Galsangchering in 1774

and known as the Peaceful Holiness (*amurlinggui bogda*). He died in 1812 (Ġaldanwangchugdorji 1994: 181–182). The Fifth Mergen Diyanchi Ishichoimpil (ye shes chos 'phel) was born to noble Khadurab of the Urad Middle Duke Banner, and was installed by the thirteenth Duke Batuvachir in twenty-fifth year of Jiaqing (1820). He died young in 1843 (ibid: 182-183).

Chorji Baḡshi lineage

The First Chorji Baḡshi Ögligündalai was born to an ordinary family of Urad Right Duke Banner. He was one of the five disciples of the second Mergen Diyanchi, who came to Mergen Monastery when the later summoned them. Ögligündalai received the title *Erdeni Güüshi Mergen Chorji* (Jewel Translator Sage Dharma King') from the Kanjurwa Mergen Nomun Khan in 1726. He was called 'Chorji Baḡshi' firstly because of his *chorji* title and secondly, according to *DB*, because he was made teacher by the Third Mergen Gegen. The First Chorji Baḡshi supported building Shigetei Monastery, one of the 24 monasteries of the Urad Right Duke Banner.

The Second Chorji Baḡshi Lokasuljamsu was born to a noble of Minggan Banner. He held the position of Second Da Lama of the Banner¹²⁷ in Mergen Monastery for 30 years, and was said to have strictly implemented the new chanting established by the Third Mergen Gegen. He went to Tibet once for delivering donation of Mergen Gegen. He died in 1799. The Third Chorji Baḡshi Ewarashidongdob was born to Administrator Geligjampil of Minggan Banner and served as the fourth Da Lama of Mergen Monastery. After mastering Mongolian chanting, he learnt Tibetan and stayed for several years in Tibet. He died in his prime year. The Fourth Chorji Baḡshi Blobsangjamsan was born to Administrator Jambaldorji of Urad Right Duke Banner, and had just started learning Mongolian chanting (ibid: 184-186).

Baraḡun Da Baḡshi lineage

The First Baraḡun Da Baḡshi Dambijalsan (Bstan pa'i rgayl mtshan) was born to an ordinary family in the Urad Right Duke Banner. He was also one of the five disciples of the Second Mergen Diyanchi who came to Mergen Monastery at the summoning of his master. He was the First Da Lama of Mergen Monastery. It is noted in *DB* 'After his

¹²⁷ A Da Lama (Grand Lama) of a banner was a general administrator of all the monasteries and religious affairs of the banner.

death, when his body was cremated, it is said that there appeared a pattern of maṇḍala and a definite sign of a *yidam*. Mergen Gegen saw this personally and took a blessing from it and made an object of worship out of it' (*DB*: 186). The Seventh Dalai Lama bestowed upon him the title Darkhan Chorji (Noble King of Doctrine) when he went to Tibet in 1743. However, his successive reincarnations were not known by this title. The 'Baragun' and 'Bagshi' in his title were originated from the fact that he was made lama and kept a seat of the second lama at the Baragun Monastery (West Monastery i.e. Duke's Monastery). *DB* notes, 'the nobles of the Right Duke Banner call him 'Lama of the Lama' (or Bagshi of Lama).¹²⁸ As he was the first Da Lama of Mergen Monastery, his title contained the word 'Da'. The second reincarnation Baldorji was born to noble Khobai. He made Kanjurwa Khutuḡtu his lama, but died at a young age. The Third Baragun Da Bagshi Sewangdorji (Tshe dbang rdo rje) was born to Khorchin Jorigtu Qin Wang, and was recognised by drawing lot from the golden urn. He mastered both Mongolian and Tibetan (*DB*: 186–189).

Khubilgan Lamakhai lineage

It was recorded in the banner archive in 1750 that the First Khubilgan Lamakhai¹²⁹ Yanda was born to a man called Amugulang of the Urad Right Duke Banner. He was recognised as the reincarnation of Ujar Shiregen-ü Lama ('Abbot Lama'). The origin of the previous Ujar Khubilgan was said to be a Tibetan lama who had stayed in Chagan Khota Monastery and been worshipped by the people of all three banners of Urad. It is clear that Khubilgan Lamakhai converted to the Mongolian Line of Buddhist practices and became the disciple of the Second Mergen Diyanchi. Thus, he was taken as the first of the Khubilgan Lamakhai lineage of reincarnations.

Then the second incarnation Ishigalsang (Ye shes rgyal mtshan) was born in Minggan Banner. He was first installed in Chagan Khota Monastery. It is said in the *DB* 'He always said that he was the youngest among the reincarnations who were disciples of Mergen Gegen and was very faithful to the Gegen and was very cautious about the pattern and rhythm of Mergen Gegen's "New Mongolian Chanting." He became the third Banner Da Lama in Mergen Monastery and 'held the services and religion in the way Mergen Gegen set' (*DB*: 191–192).

¹²⁸ As all the lamas in the Duke's Monastery were lamas to the nobles, and Baragun Da Bagshi was a lama to those lamas, he was called 'lama of the lamas' by the nobles.

¹²⁹ The term Lamakhai consists of lama + the Mongolian honorific suffix *-khai*.

Güüshi Da Baḡshi lineage

The First Güüshi Da Baḡshi Nomundalai was born to a subject of a noble of the Urad Right Duke Banner. He was also known as Urad Dharma Samudra (and Sāgara), and the author of *CHJ*, the biography of the Second Neichi Toyin. He was the disciple of the Second Mergen Diyanchi and was qualified in Tibetan and Mongolian languages. As he called *Prajñā Sāgara* his root lama in the colophon of *CHJ*, he was also disciple to *Prajñā sāgara*, the Urad Güüshi Biligündalai.

The First Güüshi Da Baḡshi was a great translator and scholar. Ḡaldanwangchugdorji notes that he heard 'Before Mergen Gegen's "New Translation" appeared, the First Güüshi Da Baḡshi's "old translation" and "old chanting" had been used' (*DB*: 179). He participated in the translation of Tanjur in 1741. He was called Güüshi because he was a good translator. He had been the Da Lama of the new subordinate monastery of Neichi Toyin in Höhhot, so he was called Da Baḡshi.

The First Güüshi Da Baḡshi initiated Buddhist mask dance (*cham*, Tib. '*cham*') in Mergen Monastery. It is recorded in *DB* that in the ninth year of Emperor Yongzheng, the year of the pig (1731), Güüshi Da Baḡshi sent a letter from Höhhot to the lamas and nobles of Urad Right Duke Banner advising them to ask for the Third Neichi Toyin to send his monks to teach *cham* in Mergen Monastery. He also fully prepared *cham* costumes and ornaments for them (*DB*: 204).

It is also noted that he has credit in new Mongolian translation and Mongolian chanting. This means that he helped with the Third Mergen Gegen's new translation and new types of chanting. He accompanied another of his masters, the First Chorji Lama Ögligündalai travelling all over Khorchin banners to teach and practice medicine, so he was renowned as 'Mergen Gegen' and 'Khubilḡan Otachi' (magical doctor). Tüshiyetü Qin Wang and others sponsored the building of a temple called Bayan-khoshigu Monastery¹³⁰ for him. Local Khorchin people call it 'Mergen Gegen's temple' but lamas in Urad Right Banner call it 'Güüshi Baḡshi's branch temple at Bayan-khoshigu.' This monastery was directly managed by Mergen Monastery and monks in that monastery conducted services in pure Mongolian (Möngke 1994: 226; 375). In 1744, the Third Jangjia Rolbidorji conferred the title 'Erdeni Sechen Chorji' to the Güüshi Baḡshi at the request of Khorchin Tüshiyetü Chin Wang Rabdan and Prince Biligtü Gündalai. In

¹³⁰ Bayankhoshigu Monastery was, in fact, built for the First Neichi Toyin by Khorchin nobles. There might be a temple built for Nomundalai in Bayankhoshigu Monastery.

Jangjia Khutuġtu's patent letter, Nomundalai was called the 'Urad Gūūshi Nomundalai who translates everything that has been verified, who is trained in Tibetan and Mongolian, who has broadened his precise understanding of the supreme order [*erkin jarlig*, the Buddha word], who is the worthy scholar of veneration, who does beneficial deeds for others everywhere' (*DB*: 203–205).

The Second *Gūūshi Da Baġshi* Gendundandara was born to Chambal, a subject of Noble Rabdan of the Urad Right Duke Banner. He studied in Tibet for a long time and also stayed in Badġar Monastery. So he was very accomplished in both sutra and Tantra, and was made a teacher by the Fourth Mergen Gegen and other lamas. The third reincarnation of this lama called Jamsangdandara was born to Engkebayar, also a subject of the Banner treasury. He died at a young age. The fourth reincarnation, whose name is not known, was born to Ġombujab, a local official of the Urad Right Duke Banner. He studied in the Department of Philosophy in Badġar Monastery for nine years. After he came back from Badġar, he was sent by Duke Ġaldanwangchuġdorji, the author of *DB* to Khorchin to do further study, because there was no one qualified to teach him. (*ibid*: 205–207).

Emchi Lama lineage

The First Emchi Lama Sūrūmjamsu was born to Sangjai of Khorchin Arrow (*somu*) of Urad Middle Banner. He was one of the five disciples of the Second Mergen Diyanchi. He did not esteem the others, did not get along well with others, as he was the eldest among the lamas, and had good expertise in Mongolian and Tibetan languages. However, he was especially very good at medicine, also did diyana meditation, and was a good disciple who cherished Mergen Gegen's teaching and discipline. The second reincarnation Danjinjamsu was born to Noble Badang of Mingġan Banner but died very young. The Third Emchi Lama Jimbajamsu was born to Rinchen of Jaguchin Arrow of Right Banner. After mastering Mongolian Chanting, he studied in the Lamrim Department of the West Monastery. He also studied translation and taken initiations from Ariyabalu Gegen (*ibid*: 209–210).

Rasang Lama lineage

The First Rasang Lama was named Ġalsangdandara, also known as Balsang Da Lama because he was made assistant Da Lama when Chorji Baġshi was young. He made Gūūshi Da Baġshi his lama. He was the contemporary of the Third Mergen Gegen. As mentioned above, there is no information available about how the Rasang Lama lineage of reincarnation was initiated. The second reincarnation, whose name is not known, was born to Shaġshabad, a servant of the banner governor Mishiga. He stayed in Badġar Monastery for three years when he was young. But it is said that he was taken back to Mergen Monastery because he was considered to be too intelligent, which might cause problem to the doctrine (ibid: 208). This statement might either mean that he would have given up Mongolian chanting or would not come back if he were too accomplished in Tibetan line of Buddhist practice in Badġar because he was too intelligent, or imply that Rasang Lama's accomplishment would have threatened someone's authority. *DB* states that when one of Rasang Lama and another lama called Baraġun Lama was to be appointed as Da Lama of Mergen Monastery, the disciples rejected them, so they just coordinated the task. Although the two lamas were very accomplished, the Lamrim Department was not convened any longer in Mergen Monastery (ibid: 208). As will be seen, Lamrim Department conducted Buddhist practice in Tibetan in the Duke's Monastery.

The significance of having seven lineages of reincarnations in Mergen Monastery was that they originated from highly learnt lamas in their tradition and were loyal to their tradition. They were able to keep a multiple guru-disciple relationship within the tradition. This means, when a new reincarnation was installed, the accomplished ones would teach him no matter how he was superior or master to them in his previous lifetime. I call this internal Guru-Disciple relationship. This relationship was crucial for establishment and continuity of the Mergen Tradition because it formed a self-generating system which was sufficient to regenerate and maintain the high standard of the tradition. This relationship also provided a favourable environment for the Third Mergen Gegen's achievement. The internal Guru-Disciple relationship of Mergen Monastery can be seen from *DB*.

While the First Chorji Baġshi, Baraġun Da Baġshi, Khubilġan Lamakhai, Gūūshi Da Baġshi and Emchi Lama were disciples of the Second Mergen Diyanchi, the First Chorji Baġshi appeared to be exceptional.

He [The first Chorji Baḡshi] worshipped the reincarnation of Mergen Diyanchi Dinu-a [Second Mergen Diyanchi] on the top of his head. He frequently did meditation on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment with him [Mergen Diyanchi] and gained transmission of insight and attainment, and accomplished in sūtra and tantra. Due to this, the Third Mergen Gegen Lobsangdambijalsan worshipped him as his lama and also became accomplished in the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment and received teachings on sūtra and tantra. So Mergen Gegen called Ögligündalai Vajradhara' (*DB*: 184) in his writings.

He not only became guru to the reincarnation of his own guru, but also did so for his classmate, the First Gütüshi Da Baḡshi (*ibid*: 204).

Then, the First Gütüshi Baḡshi became guru to the first Rasang Lama, and the Mergen Gegen became guru to the Second Khubilḡan Lamakhai. When talking about the Second Khubilḡan Lamakhai, *DB* states 'He always said that he was the youngest among the reincarnations who were disciples of Mergen Gegen and was very faithful to the Gegen and cautious about the pattern and rhythm of Mergen Gegen's New Mongolian Chanting' (*ibid*: 191). From this statement, we can also assume that the Mergen Gegen had some other disciples who were also reincarnations.

Having such a number of highly accomplished lamas, the Mergen Tradition had a sufficient intellectual resource for fostering their own disciples within the tradition independently. This multiple guru-disciple relationship extended to the other 24 subordinate monasteries and several other attached monasteries of Mergen Monastery. For example, Güng-ün Süm-e was another major monastery of Urad Right Duke Banner and its reincarnate lama also originated from a disciple of the Second Mergen Diyanchi. It is stated in *DB* that there was a lama known as gelong in Urad Right Duke Banner who gained the special favour and instruction of the Second Mergen Diyanchi. He meditated in the mountains in isolation and became very accomplished. He was said to be able to cross the Yellow River without using a boat, but only a few finger width of his lower garment got wet. Thus, he gained strong faith of local monks and laities. As the second reincarnation was born to a family with a Chinese father and Mongolian mother and studied in Tibet, he received some prejudice. So he vowed to be born in a family of high status. Indeed the third reincarnation was found in the Duke's family. He was the brother of Ġaldanwangchuḡdorji, the author of *DB*, and was called Khubilḡan Lama or Ariyabalu-yin Khubilḡan. Since he was born to the Duke's family, the Duke rebuilt and extended his small temple into a big monastery and it became the Duke's Monastery (*gung-ün süm-e*) (*DB*: 6–15). This reincarnation had also kept a mutual guru-disciple

relationship with lamas of Mergen Monastery. For example, the Third Khubilgan lama made the Third Baragun Da Bagshi his lama, whereas he was made lama by the Third Chorji Bagshi and the Third Emchi Bagshi.

Establishment of these home-grown seven lineages of reincarnations in Mergen Monastery and their internal guru-disciple relationship enabled the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhist practices to be established and persevered within the adverse political and religious conditions shown in Chapter 2.

2. Support of local nobles

Another factor enabling the internalisation of the Mergen Tradition is the local noble's support. Local nobles, more precisely, nobles of Urad Right Duke Banner also played an important role for establishment and maintenance of the self generating system of the Mergen Tradition. Without their consistent strong support, there would have been no Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhist practices.

As seen in Chapter 4, initiation of the Mongolian Line of Buddhism in Urad Right Duke Banner was instigated by the Fifth Ruling Duke Nomun (1672–1683) who first made the First Mergen Diyanchi his lama. Then his son the sixth Duke Darmadai (1684–1689) found the reincarnation of the Mergen Diyanchi. This is important because he established a new lineage of reincarnations. If not, there might not have been a later Mergen Gegen lineage. Then the seventh Duke Darmashiri (1689–1725), son of Duke Darmadai, built a Banner Monastery, Mergen Monastery, and installed the Second Mergen Diyanchi in it. The Second Mergen Diyanchi brought together all his disciples in Urad Right Duke Banner. Since then, any major issues of the Mergen Tradition have been closely connected to and relied upon the support of the nobles. Mergen Gegen notes clearly and truthfully in I-7, 'Petition to Monks',

As for the ruling nobles, they have never done anything like officially charging money from us and leaving us in misery, but have provided us with monastery, halls, compounds and houses, chairs and cushions, offerings and ornaments, even with pans and spoons, which is clear in the eyes of the monks' (Lubsangdambijalsan 1997: vol. 1).

Galdanwangchugdorji especially recounts the favour of the nobles to Mergen Monastery. After relating the process of establishment of the Mergen Gegen lineage of reincarnation by the Dukes, he relates that a noble of the banner called Gangdashirab,

who was the enemy of religion and doctrine, accused twice the Duke Darmashiri of causing suffering to clericals and laities of the banner by building the monastery and a blue house with dragon decoration at the unsettled time of war and military conflict. Although the Duke Darmashiri was judged wrong by the authorities as irrationally esteeming Buddhism without showing mercy to his subjects,¹³¹ his son Darmağarudi reported to the higher authority that [Darmashiri] had done nothing violating faith and principle. Then, he brought the Red Kanjur from Tibet to worship in the monastery' (*DB*: 230). Although it does not state clearly here that Darmashiri was accused of and punished for supporting the Mongol Line of Buddhism, mentioning of Darmağarudi's bringing a copy of Tibetan Kanjur is to show the point. Darmağarudi was trying to prove that they were acting in conformity with Manchu religious policy.

Then *DB* relates in detail the support of the succeeding nobles of Urad Right Duke Banner. The Eighth Duke Darmağarudi sponsored building the great hall of the monastery in 1734. During the reign of the Ninth Duke Darmaridhi (1751–1764), the Tanjur was brought to Mergen. The Tenth Duke Ġalsangchering (1764–1779) requested and obtained an official name *Shashin-i badarağuluğchi Süm-e* (Monastery that Prospers the Religion) upon Mergen Monastery from the Manchu Court in 1763. There are many accounts of how the Twelfth Duke Jigmeddorji (1779–1791), the Thirteenth Duke Batuvachir (1791–1834) and his second wife supported the religion and services zealously. *DB* notes that all their deeds such as this were recorded in the record of Mergen Monastery and the West Monastery (*DB*, 231–233).

Ġaldanwangchuğdorji, the author of *DB* was the fourteenth ruling Duke of Urad Right Duke Banner. From his work, we can see him as devoted and enthusiastic supporter of the Mergen Tradition. His work provided the richest information about the establishment of the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhist practices. He unquestionably acknowledges the Neichi Toyin's initiation and Mergen Gegen's institutionalisation of the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism. His work itself is the result of his devotion to the Mongolian Line of Buddhism. While he was relating his predecessor's favour for supporting Buddhism, he said that it was not for praising his parents and grandparents. He clarifies his purpose in writing *DB*,

I have monk and lay sons who will be patrons of the lama and monastery. They should respect monks, support religion and the state following previous conventions. I write [this book] for them believing that if they know well all

¹³¹ Because of the accusation, Darmashiri was relieved of his post and his son Darmağarudi inherited it.

these, they will know their parents' favour to religion.[...] Especially they will revere lama teachers, admire monks, conduct pure deeds and support religion and services that were established by their ancestors. [They will] treat all the monasteries equally and aid them as much as they can (*DB*: 135).

The local nobles' supports recorded in *DB* also reflect the support of people of Urad Right Duke Banner. Any construction, any ritual and events conducted in the monasteries were completed with the aid of alms donated by members of local community.

It should also be noted here that *DB* always mentions 'religion and state' (*shashin törü*) together, as in the above quotation. In fact, 'two rules of state and religion' (*törü shashin khoyar yosun*) have been an important expression in Mongolian history since the Yuan Dynasty. For example, while Khubilai and 'Phakpa established the 'two rules of state and religion', Altan Khan and Bsod nams rgya mtsho considered themselves reviving the 'two rules' initiated by Khubilai and 'Phakpa. In the Qing dynasty, Mongols still considered the 'two rules of state and religion' existed on the premise of accepting the Manchu state as their own state. However, while the 'two rules of state and religion' were combined in the way of external dominance over Mongolia in the Manchu Qing Dynasty, the two rules in Urad Right Duke Banner were the banner government and the Mergen Tradition of Buddhist practices. While 'state' was usually written before 'religion' in other sources, it was the other way around in *DB*. That might show the status of religion above the government in Urad Right Duke Banner, while Yuan and Manchu states were always above religion. The Dukes and nobles were strongly religious people and it seems that they have supported and venerated religion unconditionally. There were several lamas from the Duke's family. The Third Khubilgan lama was son of the thirteenth Duke Batuvachir, and Samburinchin, a son of the fourteenth Duke Galdanwangchugdorji was also a monk. The twelfth Duke Jigmeddorji was a monk called Wangdui Toyin but reluctantly inherited the post of the Ruling Duke, as there was no other heir. Even so, according to *DB*, he specially built a Tibetan-style temple and enshrined within it the golden statue of Tsongkhapa which was given by the Neichi Toyin to his great great-grandfather Nomun, a copy of Mongolian Kanjur written in vermilion and ink, and statues of Lhamo and Jamsarang (Tib. *Lcam sring*) that had been worshipped in a *ger* (yurt) palace of previous Dukes. He stayed in a *ger* palace and vigorously supported and managed religious and government affairs. Even if he had the outward appearance of a noble, he did not abandon his mindset of renunciation, and

esteemed Buddhist doctrine and exerted himself in Diyana meditation. Because of his earlier habit of being a monk, he venerated the lineage lamas, Neichi Toyin, Mergen Gegen and all the lamas and monks of Mergen Monastery, and treated all the monasteries in the banner equally (*DB*: 13–14). Ġaldanwangchugdorji was the fourteenth Duke of the banner. According to his attitude in *DB*, especially his ‘poem of regret’, he would rather have been a monk than a ruling duke and deeply regretted not being able to do so and felt that he was wasting his life in worldly affairs. In this sense, the combination of ‘religion and state’ in Urad Right Duke Banner was more of governing the state in Buddhist principles which is different from the typical ‘two rules of state and religion’ in Mongolian history where the state often patronised religion for its political purpose.

3. Relationship to Neichi Toyin Line

Although the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism diverged into a separate line from the Neichi Toyin Line, it always identified itself as the specific Mongolian Buddhist practices initiated by the Neichi Toyin and kept a close relationship with Neichi Toyin’s line in certain ways. Therefore, the relationship of the Mergen Tradition with the Neichi Toyin Line can still be seen as internal.

We have already seen the relationship of the Mergen Tradition with the First Neichi Toyin and the Second Neichi Toyin. The former appointed the First Mergen Diyanchi Lama to Urad Right Duke Banner and the latter taught the second Mergen Diyanchi. The Third Neichi Toyin was found in Urad Middle Duke Banner. So the Mergen Tradition still kept a close relationship with the Third Neichi Toyin. According to *DB*, the First Güüşhi Da Baġshi Nomundalai or Dharma Samudra of Mergen Monastery was appointed as the Da Lama of the newly-built affiliated monastery of Neichi Toyin. He instigated Mergen Monastery to ask Neichi Toyin to send his monks to teach *cham* there. His writing *CHJ*, the biography of the Second Neichi Toyin is another connection of the two lines. At the same time, he was also disciple to Biligündalai or Prajñā Sāgara who wrote *DCH*, the biography of the First Neichi Toyin.

Biligündalai is an important figure through which the Mergen Tradition generated various relationships to others, especially the Neichi Toyin line. Biligündalai

was one of the most outstanding scholars who was recognised and venerated by all kinds of people ranging from three generations of Manchu Emperors to officials and nobles of the state, and Mongolian and Tibetan clerical and lay nobles of different levels. Biligündalai was also known as *Shes rab rgya mtsho* in Tibetan and *Prajñā Sāgara* (or *Prajñā Samudra*) in Sanskrit. Biligündalai was born in an ordinary family of the Urad Right Duke Banner. His exact date of birth is not known but from his activities and works, it is known that he lived between 1670 and 1745. He made himself a disciple of the great scholar Lobon Chorji Ögligündalai of Mergen Monastery, Second Jangjia Khutuḡtu Agwanglobsangchoindan (*ngag dbang blo bzang chos ldan*) and Kanjurwa Nomun Khan Lobsangchulkhrim (*blo bzang tshul khrims*) (Möngke 1994: 366). He was obviously a contemporary of the Second Neichi Toyin, and it was quite possible that they had a guru-disciple relationship as well. He was appointed to be the abbot of the Yamāntaka temple in Beijing by the Neichi Toyin.¹³² He also provided rich materials for writing the biography of the Second Neichi Toyin (*CHJ*: 198). He mastered Mongolian, Tibetan, Manchu, Sanskrit and Chinese and was qualified in many subjects of Buddhist doctrine. Biligündalai participated in the work of retranslation, proof reading, block printing of the Kanjur as a principal participant from 1717–1721. He was also a leading participant of translation and block printing of the Tanjur from 1741–1749. He succeeded in propitiating Yamāntaka and had the title ‘Yangjirchi Lama’. After that, he was recorded in relevant materials as ‘Yangjirchi *Prajñā Sāgara*’ or ‘Yangjirchi Biligündalai’. He also held the Da Lama position of Song Zhu Si temple and Jing Zhu Si temple in Beijing and was the deputy governing Head Lama of Beijing. He was the general manager of the block-printing house of the Manchu Qing state, stationed in Jing Zhu Si temple. He taught successively in the Beijing Mongolian Language School and Beijing Tibetan Language School, and also taught Mongolian to the Crown Prince (later Emperor Qianlong) and the Third Jangjia Khutuḡtu Rolbidorji. Biligündalai became very accomplished and famous in the 18th century and gained the great favour of the Kangxi Emperor (Möngke 2000: 92). Biligündalai built Tabun Suburganai Süm-e (Monastery of Five Stupas) at his own expense in Höhhot in 1727.¹³³ The Emperor Yongzheng

¹³² As seen in Chapter 3, the temple was granted to the Second Neichi Toyin Khutuḡtu by Emperor Kangxi in 1693. All rituals and services were conducted purely in Mongolian and most of the 20 monks headed by the Head Lama were from the various monasteries of Urad Right Duke Banner (Möngke 2000: 92).

¹³³ Pozdneyev describes ‘With respect to beauty and originality in the architecture of buildings, the foremost of the minor monasteries is unquestionably the one known as “Tabun suburgan dzuu” or, as the

bestowed a tablet with an official name 'Gegen Nigülestügchi Süm-e' to his monastery, which became a subject monastery of Neichi Toyin's Bağa Juu (Altanorgil 1982: 130). Biligündalai died in 1745 while he was holding the position of the ruling Head Lama of the capital city (Altanorgil 1982, 130). Tabun Suburğanaï Süm-e became the residence of successive Yangjirchi Lamas.

The special status and relationship of Biligündalai might have played an important role for the state's tolerance of the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism. Biligündalai was also uncle of the Da Bağshi of Mergen Monastery. It was mentioned in the Dalai Lama's patent letter conferring the title *Darkhan Chorji* upon the Da Bağshi, "Da lama Bstan Pa'i rgyal mtshan of Urad Right Duke Banner, Duke Darmagarudi's Banner, was recommended to be Da Lama by his uncle, Da Lama Biligündalai when he was alive, to Emperor Shengzu [Kangxi]" (DB: 186).

There is an interesting episode within the relationship between the Mergen Tradition and Neichi Toyin line. DB recounts,

In the year of the horse [1810], Boğda Toyin Gegen specially sent Dagba Da Lama from Khorchin with a gift and ritualistic scarf saying 'I am going to your place next year. As I am going to build a residence in the place called Khoyar Khudug in your banner, please grant me some wood.' In the year of the sheep, the Boğda was born [1811]¹³⁴ and the residence was built (DB: 18).

This account is actually talking about the fact that the Sixth Neichi Toyin was born to a noble called Dorji of Urad Right Duke Banner. It seems that there had already been a residence for Neichi Toyin in Mergen Monastery. When the Fifth Neichi Toyin sent a message to say that he was to visit the following year, lamas in Mergen Monastery just repaired the old residence in Mergen Monastery. However, the Fifth Neichi Toyin did not mean to visit in that lifetime because he died not long after in the same year. When the Sixth Neichi Toyin was born in Urad Right Duke Banner, people of Urad realised the meaning of the Fifth Neichi Toyin's message and built a new residence in a place called Khoyar Khudug. It is said that a large building was built and was divided into two quarters. The Right quarter was prepared for Jangjia Khutuḡtu and the left one

Chinese call it, *Wu-t'a-ssu*, i.e. the temple of the five suburgans [pagoda]. This name became established for the monastery doubtless because of a suburgan of extraordinarily original design there. [...] It is constructed with five towers, and except for its pedestal, it is faced with tiling in the manner of a tiled stove, with a separate burkhan [buddha image] depicted on each glazed surface' (Pozdneyev 1893, 46).

¹³⁴ The account here is confusing. However, from the context it is clear that the Fifth Neichi Toyin sent a letter to request wood but he died not long after that. Surprisingly, the Sixth Neichi Toyin was born in Urad Right Duke Banner. So the account implies that the Neichi Toyin's letter actually implied his rebirth among the Urads.

was for the Neichi Toyin. Since then, the Sixth Neichi Toyin's visit and support for the Urad Right Duke Banner became more frequent and there was another residence for him built in the West Monastery (*DB*: 29–30). The Sixth Neichi Toyin visited Beijing and paid his respect to the Emperor six times during his lifetime (Delige 1998: 343). We may speculate that the Sixth Neichi Toyin might have earned some support for the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism through his capacity to contact the Manchu Court because he was from Urad Right Duke Banner and the people of the banner also highly venerated him and kept close contact with him.

To sum up, the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism kept a close relationship with the Neichi Toyin Line and gained constant support and benefit from it and from the Manchu state through it. On the one hand, the Mergen Tradition's claim of its origin from the Neichi Toyin line, assured its authenticity and identity, and benefited through this relationship. On the other hand, the Mergen Tradition kept its distinction from the Neichi Toyin Line by its own established system. Also through its relationship with the Neichi Toyin line, the Mergen Tradition kept a special relationship with the Khorchin Mongols and benefited from it.

4. Relationship with Khorchins

Although Urad and Khorchin Mongols were historically related, the relationship between them was kept mainly due to the Neichi Toyin and his initiated Mongolian Line of Buddhist practices. The Mergen Tradition's appreciation of the Neichi Toyin as their founder lineage lama naturally made them inseparable from Khorchin Mongols. Mergen Gegen writes in the text designated for Öljei Badaraḡsan Süm-e of Khorchin, 'We are the successors of the master of religion of the Mongols in the East, refuge of living beings, liberator Boḡda Neichi Toyin, jewel Gegen' (*CW4*, Vol. I: 26r).

There had been frequent contact between the Mergen Tradition and Khorchin Mongols apart from participating together in the life events of Neichi Toyins, such as recognition, installation and funerals. As it was mentioned earlier, the First Chorji Baḡshi Öḡligündalai extensively travelled to Khorchin and was much venerated by the Khorchin Mongols. When he left Khorchin, Khorchin Mongols earnestly requested him to stay. In this situation, he left his major disciple Nomundalai, the First Güüşhi Da Baḡshi as his representative. The latter was equally respected by the Khorchin Mongols

who specially built the temple for him in Bayan-khoshigu Monastery and the nobles, headed by the Tüshiyetü Qin Wang Rabdan, requested the Jangjia Khutuḡtu to bestow a title upon the Gūüshi Baḡshi. The latter bestowed upon him the title 'Erdeni Sechen Chorji' (Jewel Wise King of the Doctrine) in 1744 (DB: 204). Bayan-khoshigu Monastery became the affiliated monastery of Mergen Monastery although it was originally built for the First Neichi Toyin. Until the communists took over, Mergen Monastery had been sending people to teach and deal with other religious affairs in Bayan-khoshigu Monastery (Möngke 1994: 376). According to Hurelbaatar's fieldwork,¹³⁵ even the last Gūüshi Baḡshi was installed in Bayankhoshigu monastery and left the 'Department of Gūüshi Baḡshi' in Mergen Monastery empty. The last lama who was sent from Mergen Monastery to Bayankhoshigu monastery in 1947 was called Shira-otkhun and he went back to Mergen Monastery when the communists took over. He was still alive in 1992 when Hurelbaatar did his first fieldwork in Mergen Monastery.

The third reincarnation of Baraḡun Da Baḡshi was the son of Khorchin Joriḡtu Qin Wang. It is not unusual to find a reincarnation of a lama from somewhere else than the area of his original monastery. However, in the Mergen Tradition it had special significance. As shown above, most of the seven reincarnations of the Mergen Tradition were found and installed locally, which was a feature of internalisation of the Mergen Tradition. When their reincarnations were occasionally found somewhere else, they were often found in either Mingḡan or Khorchin, which would not affect the internalisation of the Mergen Tradition because they were also patrons of the Neichi Toyin.

Above all, the Third Mergen Gegen became very popular among the Khorchin Mongols. There are four texts concerning Khorchins in his collected works. One is Text I-8, *Öljei badaraḡsan süm-e-yin khuvaraḡ-tur jakiy-a bolḡan toḡtaḡaḡsan bichig eldeb jüül erdeni-yin erike kemekü orusiba* (Jewel rosary, various documents designed as instruction to the monks of Öljei badaraḡsan süm-e). This is a long text that establishes a systematic regulation and discipline for the monastery. According to the colophon, the text was written at the request of Gebkhüi (Tib. *dge bskos*) of Öljei badaraḡsan süm-e that was newly built by Khoshui Joriḡtu Qin Wang of Khorchin. The whole collection of WCI, was specifically designed for the same monastery by the Third Mergen Gegen. The colophon of the collection states:

¹³⁵ Hurelbaatar has done many times fieldwork in the Mergen Monastery and its surrounding areas for an anthropological research project since 1992.

His Holiness has personally given the complete set of *the wishing stone rosary, the ornament of throat of the bright minded people, the clear doctrinal deeds, and designed major readings for the öljei badaraḡsan süm-e monastery by vajradhara Mergen Diyanchi Blama-yin gegen* to me with its authorisation and quintessential instructions. Then he did a ritual of 'wheel of assemblage' [*Chigulḡan-u kürdün*, Tib. *tshogs 'khor*] and prophesised 'you are actually a *yogi* of Yamāntaka'. He gave me the hand-drum, bell and rosary that he used and said, 'Read the texts I have given you in your monastery. The blessing of the Boḡda Lama¹³⁶ will reside with you and the tradition of my religion will be established¹³⁷ in your monastery.' Impressed by this order I, the disciple faithful Chorji Chair Da Lama Lobsangsabdan, who lives on the nectar of His Holiness,¹³⁸ had the print made in order to publish the Vajra teaching with faultless faith for the sake of the longevity of the Vajradhara Lama¹³⁹ and dissemination of the religion of Vajrayana in the ten directions.'¹⁴⁰

Mergen Gegen seemed to have hoped to develop his tradition in Khorchin and entrusted this task to this Da Lama Lobsangsabdan. The Third Mergen Gegen was also invited by Baḡarin people to conduct *maṇi* ritual in 1737. He had also given Amitāyus, Avalokiteśvara and Yamāntaka initiations to a large number of people including the ruling prince of the banner (Möngke 1995: 111). We can assume that Mergen Gegen must have also been invited to other places in eastern Mongolia. This relationship means that the Mergen Tradition was connected to a larger patron community which was politically strong and favoured the Mongolian line of Buddhist practices. However, this community was not able to widely promote the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism as Mergen Gegen wished as it had been prevented as early as the First Neichi Toyin's time.

¹³⁶ 'Boḡda lama' refers to the first Neichi Toyin.

¹³⁷ This statement conveys that the third Mergen Gegen was indeed consciously formulating a Mongolian Buddhist tradition.

¹³⁸ This refers to the First Neichi Toyin.

¹³⁹ This refers to the Third Mergen Gegen.

¹⁴⁰ The ten directions are the four cardinal directions, four intermediate directions, and zenith and nadir.

5. Other relationships

While the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism was established and maintained on strongly internalised and localised bases, it did not close itself up completely from the rest of the world but maintained some moderate external relationship to enrich and vitalise itself. Such 'moderation' was important for the Mergen Tradition, otherwise, it would have fallen into the same situation as the early stage of the Neichi Toyin Line. As seen earlier, when the Neichi Toyin Line became too independent to obey the Manchu court, it was suppressed and separated from its patron communities; when it went too close to the Manchu Court, it encountered a danger of Tibetanisation; When it lost the Manchu support, it also lost its influence and became even less significant than the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism. From the limited available materials, we still can see how the Mergen Tradition managed to balance its external relationship so as to sustain itself in the overwhelming Manchu controlled Tibetan dominant religious environment. There are multiple external relationships that are revealed in *DB*, such as that with Manchu court, Jangjia Khutuḡtu, Kanjurwa Nom-un Khan, Badḡar Monastery, and Tibet. I will group these multiple relationships into two major categories: relationship to the Manchu court and relationship to Tibetan Line.

Relationship to the Manchu Court

As the Mergen Tradition was only a small scale of local practice, it did not draw much attention or arouse the alarm of Manchu rulers, as did the Neichi Toyin. It maintained itself locally in its own way without much state interference. As seen above, there were seven reincarnations in Mergen Monastery, who had been locally recognised without drawing lots from the golden urn that was administered by the Manchu Court. It was only later that three of the seven reincarnations were registered with the Manchu court. They were Mergen Gegen, Da Baḡshi and Chorji Baḡshi. However, their registrations seem to be more reluctant than voluntary. As the Fourth Mergen Gegen was born to the ruling Duke of the Urad Left Banner, it had to be reported to the state when he was installed. *DB* states: 'Since he was installed by reporting to the state, he was not able to escape from going to stay in [Beijing] on duty of Khutuḡtus, and so he went once' (*DB*: 181). The Third Da Baḡshi was recognised by drawing lots from the golden urn because he was born to a Khorchin ruling prince who was so close to the Manchu Court.

However, he did not stay in Beijing on duty. *DB* states, 'Although the Third Da Bagshi was recognised by 'drawing lots from the golden urn, he did not go on duty because he was so wise that he anticipated the trouble of dealing with the Ministry of Dependencies' (*DB*: 189). The Fifth Mergen Gegen and the Fourth Da Bagshi did not go on duty to Beijing using the excuse of poor health even when the Manchu court sent for them several times. The duke of the banner suggested that it was a waste of money and no good for either religion or living beings. Since then, it became a regulation for the Mergen Tradition not to go on duty. This was, in effect, a disobedience of the Emperor's order which is unacceptable in principle. However, it worked for the Mergen Tradition. The reason might be that staying on duty in Beijing was in effect being kept there as a kind of hostage. It was an important means of restricting Mongolian princes and influential high lamas who had the potentiality of instigating rebellion against Manchu rule. As for the Mergen Tradition, there could barely be such threat. The Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism was merely a religious conduct.

The Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism also benefited from the Manchu court through its relationship with the Khorchins. As mentioned above, the Third Da Bagshi was born to Khorchin prince Jorigtu and was reported to the Ministry of Dependencies and recognised by 'drawing lots from the golden urn'. It was an exception to the policy of banning any reincarnation from a Mongol noble's family. The reason why the Da Bagshi was permitted was because of the close relationship of Khorchin Jorigtu Qin Wang and the Manchu Emperors. As mentioned before, Khorchin Jorigtu Qin Wang's family had a very close affinity with the Manchu royal family. There were about 60 marriages between the two families. For example, the second Emperor Taizong had three wives and the Third Emperor Shunzhi had four wives from the same family of Khorchin Darkhan Banner (Du 2003: 24–26). The First Gütishi Bagshi's obtaining the title from the state preceptor Jangjia Khutuġtu was also due to Khorchin nobles as seen before.

Speaking of Jangjia Khutuġtu, he should be counted as a functionary of the Manchu state as he was the state preceptor, and the voice of Manchu religious policy towards Mongolia, especially of Inner Mongolia. A year before his death, the Second Mergen Diyanchi, who had the spirit of learning, went to Dolon-nuur to receive initiations and authorisations from the Second Jangjia Khutuġtu in 1715 (*DB*: 178). The Third Jangjia Khutuġtu Rolbidorji was very influential among Mongols. He was born in

a Tibetanised Mongolian family in Qinghai. He was installed in Song Zhu Si Monastery in Beijing when he was eight. Apart from intensive training in Buddhist doctrine in Tibetan, he also became fluent in Mongolian, Chinese and Manchurian. He wrote numerous works and translation of his collected works were used for Mongolian chanting in Setsen Khan *aimak*, in Toktokho törü khoshuun (Pozdneyev 1978: 401). As shown before, translation of the Kanjur and Tenjur into Mongolian and their printing were organised by him. *Dag yig mkhas pa 'byung gnas – Merged garkhu-yin orun*, was compiled by him. Jangjia Khutuḡtu was not only influential through his works, but also through his close contact with monasteries in Inner Mongolia. He had special residences in Badḡar monastery and Dolon-nuur Monastery. Because of this, he had an extensive interaction with the Mongols. As seen before, the Third Mergen Gegen also wished to take the *gelong* vows from the Third Jangjia Khutuḡtu. The Third Jangjia Khutuḡtu's connection to the Mergen Tradition could have been due to the Urad Gütüshi Biligündalai who taught him Mongolian. As also mentioned above, Jangjia Khutuḡtu granted a title to Da Bagshi of Mergen Monastery with the recommendation of Biligündalai.

It is pertinent to note that the Fourth Jangjia Khutuḡtu Yeshidambijalsan (Ye shes bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, 1787–1846) gave a special recognition and support for Mongolian chanting in the Mergen Tradition. When the Duke's monastery founded a Lamrim Department which would be carried out in Tibetan language, the Fourth Jangjia Khutuḡtu stressed: 'Mongolian chanting has great fortune in your area, it can never be interrupted,' and suggested reading the main part of the 'Stages of the Path' in Tibetan, and chant all the other liturgies, starting from 'offering to lamas', in Mongolian (DB: 36–37).

Relationship to the Tibetan Line of Buddhist Practices

While the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism continuously maintained its Mongolian chanting tradition, it also managed to enrich its knowledge and strengthen its vitality through studying outside its tradition, that is, the Tibetan Line of practices in both Mongolia and Tibet. From the time of the Second Mergen Diyanchi, it became a convention to study outside of the tradition. As seen in Chapter 3, the Second Mergen Diyanchi went with his disciples to Ordos to study translation skills and Sanskrit. Thus, from the start the Mergen Tradition was open to outside influence.

Although *DB* only contains information about the high lamas, there are still quite many cases of the seven reincarnations' activities outside their tradition. Just a year before his death, the Second Mergen Diyanchi went to Dolon-nuur to take initiations from the Jangjia Khutugtu. The First Chorji Bagshi, who was another pioneer of the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism was given the title of 'Jewel scholar wise king of doctrine' (*erdeni güüshi mergen chorji*) by Kanjurwa Nom-un Khan in 1726 (*DB*: 184). The First Da Bagshi was given a title 'Sacred King of Doctrine' (Darkhan Chorji') by the Seventh Dalai Lama (*DB*:187-188).

The people from the Mergen Tradition who studied in Badgar Monastery, the leading academic monastery in Inner Mongolia were the Second Güüshi Da Bagshi, the Third Da Bagshi, the Fourth Güüshi Bagshi and the Second Rasang Lama. A few people from the Mergen Tradition went to Tibet to make either a pilgrimage or study. They were the First Da Bagshi, the Fourth Da Bagshi, who also went to Amdo later, and the Second Güüshi Bagshi who studied there for a long time. The Second Chorji Bagshi went to Tibet to deliver the Mergen Gegen's donation (*DB*: 185). Even the Third Mergen Gegen went to Dolon-nuur to take the *gelong* vows. He also sent donations to Tibet through the Second Chorji Bagshi and, in return, received the Fifth Dalai Lama's 'heartfelt instructions' (*DB*: 185, 207).

All the above external relationships of the Mergen Tradition show that it neither isolated itself from outside world nor rebelled the Manchu policy, nor was hostile to the Tibetan Line of Buddhist practices. In this way, the Mergen Tradition managed to obtain some support, or more accurately speaking, tolerance of the Manchu court, and religious authority to sustain itself. Furthermore, it managed to enrich and strengthen itself through some studies outside of its tradition and, to a certain extent, to gain approval of the Tibetan Buddhist authorities.

While Mergen Tradition managed to moderate the external relationship, there still emerged a trend to favour Tibetan language within it. It started from the Third Khubilgan Lama Lobsangbaldan's (bLo bzang dpal ldan) birth in the Duke's family. He studied in Mergen monastery and learned the Mongolian chanting and Tibetan language. Then, when he was twenty, he went to Tibet to study in Drepung Monastery. After that, the Duke's family greatly expanded the small temple of his previous incarnation. They also requested the Manchu Emperor to bestow upon the monastery an official name 'Bayasgulang-i Khuriyagchi Süm-e' (Monastery of Accumulating Joy), claiming that a

new monastery had been built for holding services for the longevity of the Emperor. This became the Duke's Monastery and its position rose to be equal to or even higher than Mergen Monastery was. There is a letter from the governor of Ulağanchab League to Duke Batuvachir. Batuvachir was the thirteenth ruling Duke of Urad Right Banner, father of Ġaldanwangchugdorji and the Third Khubilgan Lama of the Monastery of Accumulating Joy (Duke's Monastery). The letter grants Batuvachir's second request to make the Monastery of Accumulating Joy equal to the Banner Monastery, Mergen Monastery (Möngke 1994: 239–242). After the Third Khubilgan Lama came back from Tibet, he started to institutionalise the practices and services of the monastery separately. He favoured Tibetan chanting in his monastery and set up a Lamrim Department that use Tibetan language. If the Fourth Jangjia Khutuġtu did not emphasise Mongolian chanting as seen in the above section, the Duke's Monastery might have shifted into Tibetan Line of Buddhist practice.

The point I want to make here is that in the overwhelming, privileged environment of the Tibetan Line of Buddhist practices, there was always a danger for the Mongolian line of Buddhist practices to shift to the Tibetan Line. Especially, when it came too close to the political authorities, such things could easily happen because of the attraction of power and profit, for instance, when the Khubilgan Lama was born to the ruling Duke's family, and the Second Neichi Toyin went too close to the Manchu Emperor. This could be how all those eastern Mongolian monasteries ended up with the Tibetan Line of Buddhist practices after the Manchu Court removed the First Neichi Toyin. So, the social reason for the Mergen Tradition to be able to maintain itself is that they managed to balance its relationship with political power and the Tibetan Line on the foundation of its strong internal relationships.

CHAPTER 6. Regulation of Monastic Practices

After exploring the origin, establishment and institutionalisation of the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism, as well as its internal and external relationships, the thesis now proceeds to examine the practices of the Tradition. This will be done solely on the basis of Mergen Gegen's collected works, which consist of texts for regulations and liturgical texts, rather than academic curricula or doctrinal texts. The texts for regulations contributed to the institutionalisation of the Mergen Tradition, and the liturgical texts provide the manuals and readings for actual practices of Buddhism and some popular rituals. I will investigate the Buddhist practices of the Mergen Tradition in three interrelated areas, that is, monastic services, liturgical texts, and tantric practices.

1. Monastic services

The collected works of Mergen Gegen were composed for use in religious services, as Atwood points out: 'Mergen Gegen's life's work was to create a Mongolian liturgy for the full cycle of Buddhist service' (Atwood 2004: 346).

Monastic services (Mon. *nom-un khural*, literally 'religious assembly') are an important component of monastic activities in Mongolian Buddhism as they are in Tibet: 'The liturgical life in *dGe lugs pa* monasteries unfolds in a multiplicity of religious ceremonies in which monks are bound by duty to participate' (Tucci 1980: 142). There is some universality of monastic services found in Mongolian Buddhism. Some of them are common to all Buddhist traditions and some are common to the Gelukpa School.

According to the surveys of several monasteries in Inner and Outer Mongolia (Chengeljap 2003; Liang 1997; Pozdneyev 1978; Togtung-a 1985), the major Buddhist celebrations were commonly held in all those monasteries. In the first month, there were the celebrations of the New Year (Mon. *Chagan Sara*), and of the miracle of Śrāvastī, combined with the great aspiration prayer service (Mon. *irügel-ün khural*, Tib. *smon lam*). From the 7th to the 15th in the fourth month, there was the celebration of the special events of Śākyamuni Buddha's life: birth, enlightenment and parinirvāṇa. In the sixth month, there was the celebration of the 'Turning the Wheel of Dharma' (Mon. *nom-un kürde ergigülküi sain edür*, Tib. *chos 'khor dus chen*). In the tenth month, the celebration called the Lamp Offering Service (*jula-yin khural*) was held in memory of Tsongkhapa's

birth and death. All the monasteries performed this celebration on the 25th, but some larger monasteries held it over several days. On this occasion, one thousand oil lamps were lit in the monasteries.

However, the length and the specific contents of these celebrations varied considerably. In the monasteries in Khalkha, the celebrations in the first month were held from the 1st to the 6th, and they were called '*Tsagan Sara-yin Khural*'¹⁴¹ (Pozdneyev 1978:370–371). Badgar Monastery called this occasion 'Kanjur Service' (Mon. *Kanjur-un Khural*), during which the 108 volumes of the Kanjur were read for seven days from the 8th to the 15th. As Badgar was an academic monastery, it also held the highest degree competition called *Monlam Rabjampa* (Chengeljab 2003: 229–232). Yeke Juu in Höhhot also held this celebration from the 8th to the 15th. However, they chanted the Yamāntaka texts three times a day on the 8th and the 9th. In the mornings of these days, Lustration Ceremony (*ukiyal*, Tib. *khrus*) was performed. From the 10th to the 13th the Eulogy of the Lama (Tib. *bla ma mchod pa*) was read. On the 11th day, some ten chosen lamas read texts about Wrathful Deities (Mon. *dogshid*, Tib. *drag gshed*). On the 14th, sacrificial cake offering (Mon. *baling*, Tib. *gtor ma*, Skt. *bali*) was given to the local deities. On the 15th of the first month, the Prayer for Granting Wishes was read, and the statue of Maitreya would be paraded around the monastery at noon. In the evening, a lamp offering service was held outside the main gate of the monastery by lighting one thousand butter lamps (Liang 1997: 40). Monggöljin Gegen Süm-e (official name, *Gaikhamshig Jokichagulugchi Süm-e*) in present Liaoning Province celebrated from the 3rd to the 15th and called it 'the Great Aspiration Prayer Service' (*irügel-ün khural* or *monlam-un khural* following the Tibetan *smon lam*).

In the fourth month, Badgar Monastery performed the Water Offering Service (Mon. *usun takil-un khural*, Tib. *yon chab*) which was held from the 8th to the 15th (Chengeljab 2003: 232). Monggöljin Gegen Süm-e performed the fasting ceremony (Mon. *nungnai-yin khural*, Tib. *bsnyung gnas kyi cho ga*) which was held from the 1st to the 15th. Some monasteries performed Mañi ritual (Naranbatu, U. 1997: 164). In the case of the celebration of 'First Turning the Wheel of Dharma' in the sixth month, Yeke Juu Monastery celebrated it from the 8th to the 15th. For this celebration, the Kanjur service was held from the 8th to the 13th, and propitiating the fierce deities, giving sacrificial

¹⁴¹ *Tsagan Sara* in Outer Mongolia and *Chagan Sar-a* in Inner Mongolia, meaning 'white month', refers to the first month of lunar New Year. As Mongols take white as an auspicious colour, they call the first month of the New Year the 'white month' to symbolise the auspicious new start of a year.

cake to the local deities and aspiration prayers were performed on the 14th (Liang 1997: 41). Some others performed *cham* and paraded around the statue of Maitreya on the last day.

Apart from these most important celebrations, not many other services are included in the surveys of the monasteries mentioned above. However, a complete set of programmes of services are included in Mergen Gegen's works, which systematised and regulated all the monastic services.

Text I-9, 'Managing with Internal Harmony' presents a set of religious calendar. The programme of services was designed for collective performance of all the monasteries in the Mergen Tradition.

Daily services in the Mergen Tradition

Daily services (*ürgülji-yin khural*) included the following rituals:

Morning: Lama Yoga, Aiming at Loving Kindness (Mon. *Migdzem*, Tib. *Dmigs brtse ma*, a prayer to Tsongkhapa), recitation of texts on Yamāntaka and *Yama* (Mon. *Erlig Khan*).

Noon: offering to Lama, longevity incantation, and White Sacrificial Cake Offering.

Evening: recitation of eulogy to Goddess Tārā twenty one times, Perfection of Wisdom ten times, text on Simha-vakīrū (*arslan terigütü*), sacrificial cake offering, recitation for Prosperity of Religion (CW4: vol. I: 58).

Annual services in the Mergen Tradition

Annual services (*chaḡ-un khural*) are presented in lunar calendar.

White Month:

First day morning: offering to the Masters of the three realms of existence (*ḡurban sansar-un ejen*)¹⁴² in three sessions. All the necessary items were supplied jointly by the treasuries of all the participating monasteries.

Second day morning: offering to Yama and the Tutelary Genius (*sülde Tengri*)¹⁴³.

Everything necessary was sent to the great treasury from all the divisions.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² The three realms of existence are, 1. The world of gods, 2. the world of *nagas* or serpents, 3. the world of humans (Choima, 2000: 269).

- Third day morning: offering to the guardian spirit (Mon. *sakigulsun*, Tib. *chos bsrung*) of each division.¹⁴⁵
- Fourth day morning: burn incense (Mon. *sang*, Tib. *bsangs*) outside the monastery and raise flags (Mon. *darchug*, Tib. *dar lcog*).¹⁴⁶
- Fifth day morning: offering to the master spirit of the locality (Mon. *orun-u Tengri*, Tib. *yul lha*) of each division.
- Sixth and seventh: services in honour of the goddess *Sitātapatrā* (Mon. *Chagan Shikürtei*, Tib. *Gdugs dkar*) in five sessions of services.
- Eighth: ritual for averting harms (Mon. *yeke kharigulḡ-a*) in two sessions of services. For the expense of this, the bursar (Mon. *demchi*) from the great treasury goes out to collect donations from all the families on the 5th and keeps them in the great treasury. In the evening, performance of a music offering (Mon. *sonuskhakhui takil*) is held.
- Ninth–fourteenth: performance of offering to the Lama, recitation of Aiming at Loving Kindness, supplication prayer (*jalbaril*) to the lamas and Buddhas in the morning; making lustration of the images, incantation for longevity (*nasun-u tarni*), White Cake offering at noon; recitation of Eulogy of Miracles (*ridi khubilḡan-u maḡtagal*), aspiration prayer (*irügel*, Tib. *smon lam*) and Eulogy to the Goddess Tārā in the evening.
- Fifteenth: performance of lustration and parading of the statue of Maitreya, the *cham* dance, going around the compound, and performance of ablution, praising, and prayer for granting wishes with one session of service.
- Twenty-ninth: Gratification of deities (*khangḡal*, Tib. *bskang gso*). This service is held on the same day of every month.
- Second month: old fourteenth¹⁴⁷ and fifteenth, performance of the ritual dedicated to medicine Buddha (Mon. *Otachi*, Tib. *Sman bla*, Skt. *Bhaiṣajyaguru*).

¹⁴³ Mongols believed that everyone has their own tutelary genius that normally always accompanies him or her. Chinggis Khan's tutelary genius has been popularly known and worshipped among the Mongols until modern era (See Chapter 7).

¹⁴⁴ All the monks from the Monasteries within the Mergen Tradition were divided into four divisions (See Chapter 4).

¹⁴⁵ All four divisions had different guardian spirits.

¹⁴⁶ According to the usual Mongolian convention, the flag should be the wind horse (Mon. *kei mori*, Tib. *rlung rta*).

¹⁴⁷ I asked many people about what the 'old 14th and old 15th' refer to, but have not given a satisfactory answer. It cannot be that they refer to the lunar calculation and the rest of the days are given in solar calendar as some people suggested, because solar calculation was not known in the 18th century

Third month: old fifteenth and sixteenth, recitation of prayer to Vairocana. On this day, the offerings to the guardian spirit are brought to the Jangkhan (Tib. gtsang khang, Skt. Gandhakūṭa).¹⁴⁸

Fourth month: old fourteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth, Kanjur reading. During this time, peaceful offering (*amurlinggui tüleshi*) in relation to evocation of Yamāntaka is also made on the fifteenth; offering to the god of wealth (*ed-ün Tengri*) is made in the treasuries on the same day.

Fifth month: old fifteenth and fifteenth, performance of ritual for Amitāyus. The alms larger than the value of one *qin*¹⁴⁹ received on that day are presented to the great treasury.

Sixth month: old fourteenth and eighth–fifteenth, performance of *maṇi* service (*maniyin khural*).

Seventh month: old fifteenth and fifteenth perform the ritual dedicated to Guhyasamāja (Mon. *Nigucha Khuriyanggui*, Tib. *Gsang ba 'dus pa*, *Gsang 'dus*).

Eighth month: old fourteenth and fifteenth, a thousand offerings are made.

Ninth month: old fifteenth and fifteenth, the ritual dedicated to medicine Buddha is performed. On this day, the first of harvest is sent to the great treasury. The offering to the guardian, the oath-bound good vajra is sent to the Jangkhan.

Tenth month: old fourteenth and fifteenth, the ritual dedicated to Amitāyus is performed. On the twenty-third, twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth, oil lamp offering is made.

Eleventh month: old fifteenth and fifteenth, offering to Vairocana is performed.

Twelfth month: old fourteenth and fifteenth, the ritual dedicated to Guhyasamāja; twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth, sacrificial cake offering.

The services on the old 15th are performed by great services. Especially on *sojong*,¹⁵⁰ all must be assembled (CW4: vol. I: 58v–61r).

In the programme of annual services listed, only the procedure of *maṇi* ritual is described in detail. Other services are not described here maybe because most of them

Mongolia. It can be assumed that 'old month' (Khaguchin sar-a) might refer to the first of a double month. In lunar calendar, there is an extra month every two to four years, which doubles one of the months.

¹⁴⁸ *Gtsang khang* here refers to the temple of wrathful deities in Mergen Monastery. Text I—14 is about the building of the temple.

¹⁴⁹ Chinese weight equivalent to about 4gm.

¹⁵⁰ *Sojong* is a ritual which provides the sangha with an opportunity to purify and restore their vows, and to receive special advice from their teachers.

have corresponding liturgical text in Mergen Gegen's collected works. For the *maṇi* ritual the instruction states,

It is better to have internal ritual and external ritual. Inside the temple, lamas form into two or four shifts. At sunrise, the service starts on the west side of the monastery and the ritual of performance tantra (*üile-yin ündüsün*) lasts until noon. At noon, the service is performed on the east side of the monastery. When this shift starts reading the invocation, the west side lamas offer sacrificial cake and finish their shift. At sunset, the service is performed on the west side and when the invocation starts, the east side finishes. At midnight, the service is performed on the east side and when the invocation starts, the west side finishes their reading. The next day at sunrise, the service starts on the west side and continues in the same order. Except that tea and food are served outside in between the shifts, nobody is allowed to enter the temple apart from the invocators and the ones who conduct offerings. In the great service outside, the ritual of multiplying (*bötügekü*) *maṇi* pills is performed three times a day as it was instructed in the *sūtra*. Although anybody can read *maṇi* as it is in convention, it is better to minimise chanting the *maṇi* in the service (CW4: vol. I: 60).

The most appealing side of *maṇi* ritual to lay people was that everybody tried to be there on the last day of the ritual when the *maṇi* pills were distributed. *Maṇi* pills were millet sized red coloured pills made from special herbs. It is said that in the beginning of the *maṇi* ritual only a few pills were placed in a big jar which was kept securely sealed and placed in the monastery hall where the external ritual was performed. During the *maṇi* ritual, the pills were said to have multiplied by themselves and when the jar was opened at the end of the ritual, the pills would burst out of the jar because the jar became so full. The *maṇi* pills were very much valued by people because they were believed to have both medical and magical power to eliminate all kinds of physical and mental ailments. There is also a separate text (IV-5) for instruction of making *maṇi* pills in CW4.

Maṇi refers to the six syllable mantra, *um ma ni pad me hum* which is the heart mantra of Avalokiteśvara. There is a story about Avalokiteśvara's creation of *maṇi* among the Mongols. As Avalokiteśvara was so compassionate, he could not stand seeing the sufferings of hell beings. He went down to hell to save them by throwing them out of hell. However, the bad karma of living beings was so much that the number of the ones falling down into hell was much greater than that of those he was throwing out. Moved by his compassion, each of the thousand Buddhas of the good era gave him one of their arms. Thus, Avalokiteśvara had a form with a thousand arms. However, the living beings' bad karma was so heavy that even with the additional arms he could never empty

hell. He realised that nobody can help living beings unless they make their own attempt. So, as an easy means for living beings to cleanse their bad karma so that they can avoid the six realms of existence, he created *Maṇi*. He promised if *Maṇi* is recited properly a certain number of times (usually say a hundred thousand) with genuine confession about one's bad karma, it can not only save the person from the six realms of existence, but also can deliver him/or her to be born in the Buddha land of Debajan (Tib. *bDe ba can*, Skt. *Sukhāvatī*).¹⁵¹ Mongols call the six syllable mantra *maṇi*, the rosary *maṇi-yin erike*, the prayer wheel *maṇi-yin kürdū*, and counting beads while reciting the mantra *maṇi toḡalakhu* (counting the mantra) due to taking the number of recitations with the rosary. In the past, almost all the people recited the mantra and most people had a string of rosary. Text I-18 is an instruction for how to recite *maṇi* properly and pray to Avalokiteśvara.

A similar religious calendar is recorded by Pozdneyev in his work on the Mongolian Lamaism in the late 1870s. The similarity of this programme suggests that perhaps a similar service programme was in practice in the monasteries in Khalkha or Outer Mongolia over one hundred years after the publication of Mergen Gegen's collected works. All the services listed in Mergen Gegen's work are presented in the same sequence in Pozdneyev's book. The difference is that Pozdneyev has given more detailed explanation about some services and included a few additional minor services. For example, the celebrations of the special events of the Śākyamuni Buddha's life are not mentioned in Mergen Gegen's programme, whereas they were given with clear explanation in Pozdneyev (1978: 370–386). The Kanjur service held on the 14th and 15th of the fourth month in Mergen Gegen's programme is not specified as the celebration of the Śākyamuni Buddha's life events.

It can be supposed that the celebration of the special events of the Śākyamuni Buddha's lifetime was not as prominent as Tsongkhapa's birthday which was celebrated for three days on the 23rd, 24th and 25th of the tenth month in Mergen Gegen's programme. The reason might be because, as is often claimed, that the religion which the Mergen Tradition practices was Tsongkhapa's religion, brought by the Neichi Toyin to

¹⁵¹ I first heard this story from my father when I was very little and many times later from other people as well. While Mongols pray to be born in the *Sukhāvatī* through reciting *maṇi*, the six syllable mantra of Avalokiteśvara, Chinese people pray to be born in the same pure land of the Buddha Amitābha through recitation of *nan wu ami tuo fo* (南无阿弥陀佛, Skt. *Namo Amitabhaya Buddhaya*), the mantra of Amitābha.

Eastern Mongolia. Although Tsongkhapa is widely regarded as an important figure in Mongolian Buddhism, he means more to the Mergen Tradition because their founder lineage lama, the First Neichi Toyin was considered to be the Second Tsongkhapa. However, this does not mean that the Mergen Tradition did not revere the Śākyamuni Buddha. For instance, there is the celebration of the Śākyamuni Buddha's displaying miracles in the first month in the above religious calendar. There are also songs titled 'Supreme Śākyamuni' and 'Eulogy of Śākyamuni' written by the Third Mergen Gegen that relates the main deeds of the Śākyamuni Buddha and recounts the virtues of the Śākyamuni Buddha respectively.

There can be two possible reasons for the similarity between Pozdneyev and Mergen Gegen's religious calendars. First, the programme of services was the same in most Gelukpa monasteries whether they were in Tibet or Mongolia. However, so far, I have not obtained any other detailed written programmes from monasteries in Tibet or Mongolia with which to compare Mergen Gegen's programme. The most academic Badgar monastery in Inner Mongolia had four subject divisions similar to that of modern departments of universities (*rasang*, Tib. *grwa tshang*): Department of Philosophy (*choira rasang*, Tib. *chos grwa grwa tshang*), Department of Astrology (*duinkhor rasang* Tib. *dus 'khor grwa tshang*, Skt. Kālacakra), Department of Secret Spell (*aḡba rasang*, Tib. *sngags pa grwa tshang*), and Department of the Stages of the Path (*lamrim rasang*). So, each Department had its own services apart from the common services (*soḡchin*, Tib. *tshogs chen*) of the whole monastery.

Secondly, Pozdneyev might have copied the Mergen Gegen's programme into his book with some explanation and a few additional rites from his observations. Pozdneyev does mention the collected works of Mergen Diyanchi (Pozdneyev 1978: 402), so he might have accessed to it. Pozdneyev's programme is not only identical with Mergen Gegen's programme in dates, procedure and all the other detail, but also the Mongolian wordings are the same. If Pozdneyev's work was based on his personal observation of different monasteries in Khalkha, which were chanting in Tibetan, the Mongolian wording can not be so similar. In fact, Pozdneyev does admit that not all the services he lists were usually performed or performed completely in Khalkha monasteries (Pozdneyev 1978, 386), which does suggest that his programme of services was taken from a written one rather than actual practices.

As it is seen in the text I-9, while the whole text shows Mergen Gegen's regularisation of the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism, the programme of services which is a part of the text that unified the annual services in the tradition.

Apart from the major annual services performed by the whole Mergen Tradition, text I-12 *Mergen süm-e-yin khural-un ungshilg-a-yin temdeg bichig* (Programme of chanting in Mergen Monastery services) gives the list of texts to be chanted only in Mergen Monastery regular services.

In the morning services: Chant the texts for Taking Refuge, Prayers, Self Generation (*öber egüsgekü*), Sacrificial cake offering, Prayers for wish granting, Dissolution (*shinggel*), Eulogy to Amitāyus, Incantation for Longevity, Supplication to Remain Stable of the Lamas.

For noon service: Chant the texts for Taking Refuge, Glorious Candana,¹⁵² Three important points (*uchirtu*), *Sitātapatrā*, Perfection of Wisdom, *Vajravidāraṇa*, make incense offering (*bsangs*), make White sacrificial cake offering, recite Retention mantra (Mon. *toḡtaḡal*, Tib. *gzungs*).

In the evening services: Chant the texts for Taking Refuge, Three Places, *Siṃha-vakīrū* (*arslan terigütü*), Prayer to Lamas, make sacrificial cake offering to Goddess Tārā, read Prosperity of Religion.

For daily chanting (*chaḡ chaḡ-un ungshikhu*): read Offering to the Lamas, Wrathful deities, Ablution, Eulogy, Prayer, Amitāyus, Vairocana, Guhyasamāja, magic weapons- malign torma (*sur*, Tib. *zor*), offering Maṇḍala, Self Entering (*öber orukhu*).

Mergen Gegen left the programme open to change by saying at the end of the text 'If there is any addition or reduction of readings, it is necessary to record and clarify them in the archive so that people know later what was being done in what way at what time' (CW4 vol. I: 84v-85r).

I-13. *Mergen Süm-e-yin ungshilg-a-yin nom-un toḡ-a bichig kemekü orusiba* (List of the readings in the Mergen Monastery services), of which the colophon states that it is a list of minimum number of texts for monks to memorise in order to serve both in the monastery and lay community. They are: Taking refuge, Glorious Candana, Goddess Tārā, Perfection of wisdom, *Siṃha-vakīrū*, *Vajravidāraṇa*, sacrificial cake offering, Aiming at Loving Kindness; Offering to Lama, five prayers for wish granting,

¹⁵² Candana is a deva, vassal of the Four Regent Gods. He is mentioned as one of the chief Yakshas to be invoked by followers of the Buddha in case of need.

Sitātapatrā, Seven Hundred Million (*küliti*), Growing Youth (*urgumal jalagu*), prayer for Prosperity of Religion, Prayer for the Living and the Dead; Petition to Glorious King, Power of Mighty One (*chidaḡchi-yin erhe*), The Noble-minded one (*sain oyutu*), Three important points (*ḡurban uchirtu*), Arhat (Mon. *aḡui shitiügen*, Tib. *gnas brtan*), Four of Yamāntaka, Guhyasamāja, Amitāyus and Vairocana, two Makākalas, King of hell, Goddess (*Lhamo*), Vaiśrāvaṇa (Mon. *Bisman Tengri*, Tib. *rnam-sras*). Mergen Gegen suggests in this text “Even if there are many ordinary holy people, there is no offence to worship one extraordinary holy person. Therefore, a prayer to the Boḡda Lama can be included. Other than these, adjust the readings in the time of casting *zor* and making Maṇḍala.¹⁵³ Memorise the readings originally assigned for the services at one’s own home. Decide separately how to read what texts in the grand services such as services in the intermediate time (Mon. *jabsar-un khural*, from the 23d of the last winter month to New Year) and the great aspiration prayer services (Mon. *irügel-ün khural*, Tib. *smon-lam*)” (CW4 I: 86v–87v). These readings seemed to meet the need of both major and minor services, as well as some texts which were assigned for the services at one’s own home and among the lay community.

These programmes and services look confusing and overlapping. The reason for the existence of several programmes might be because they were written in a course of regularisation. The programme in I–9 is a religious calendar designed to annual collective services for all the monasteries in the Mergen Tradition, while the one in I–12 is only for Mergen Monastery services, and the list in I–13 is for a minimum number of texts compulsory to memorise for monks. It seems that Mergen Gegen wrote this for monks to clear away their worries and confusion about the large number of texts to memorise.

To sum up, the services held in the Mergen Tradition can be categorised as following:

Recitation: prayer (prayer for granting wishes and supplication), taking refuge, eulogies, *Dhāranī*, *Mantra* and *sūtra*.

Rituals: offering, exorcism, self generation, throwing magic weapons (*zor*), maṇḍala, and self entering (a maṇḍala).

The Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and deities concerned in the services are:

¹⁵³ This programme is also included in Pozdneyev as a list of texts to be memorized by the monks before they leave the monastery (1978:636)

Vairocana (*Virujana*)
 Amitāyus (*Ayushi*)
 Maitreya (*Maidar*)
 Bhaiṣajyaguru (*Otachi*)
 Sitātapatrā (*Chagan shikürtei*)
 Siṃha-vakīrū (*Arslan terigütü*),
 Goddess Tārā (*Dar-a eke*)
 Yamāntaka ¹⁵⁴(*Yamandağ*)
 Guhyasamāja (*nigucha khuriyanggui*)
 Glorious Candana (*Choğtu dzandan*)
 Yama (*erlig khan*)
 God of wealth (*ed-ün Tengri*)
 Guardian, oath-bound dharma protector (*tanggariğtu nomun khan*, Tib. *Rdo rje legs pa*)
 Guardian spirit (*sakigulsun*, Tib. *chos skyong*, Skt. *Dharmapāla*)
 Lords of the three realms of existence (*ğurban sansar-un ejen*)
 Tutelary genius (*sülde Tengri*)
 Spirit of locality (*orun-u Tengri*) of each division.

A predominant common characteristic of these deities is that they are more 'pragmatic oriented'. For example, apart from the protecting spirits, there are gods of wealth, Medicine Buddha, Amitāyus, and Maitreya who are all related to a certain vital aspect of human life. Others have the function of exorcism, such as Yamāntaka, Guhyasamāja, Siṃha-vakīrū, and Glorious Candana. Apart from these names, which were directly included in the programme, there are some other important deities that can be perceived from the content of the services. For example, Tsongkhapa, Mañjuśrī and Vajrapāṇi are the main objects of worship in the Aiming at Loving Kindness, a prayer to Tsongkhapa, (Tib. *dmigs brtse ma*) which were supposed to be recited most often in services. The main object of 'Eulogy of Great Miracle' is Śākyamuni and of the *maṇi* ritual is Avalokiteśvara. In addition, we should bear in mind that there are many more Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, deities and spirits concerned in some specific texts. For example,

¹⁵⁴ The name of the deity is given as Yamāntaka rather than Vajrabhairava in the programme of services here, although Vajrabhairava is a form of Yamāntaka, and Vajrabhairava tantra was the most important practice in the Mergen Tradition.

in the text of taking refuge, as well as the Buddha, all the bodhisattvas, saints, guardians and masters involved in the lineage are evoked and prayed to.

It can be summarised from this section that the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism, no matter how insignificant and small in scale it might be, has a large range of well regulated and well organised monastic services performed in the Mongolian language thanks to the Third Mergen Gegen's endeavour. These services engaged a multitude of objects of worship, and served all kinds of spiritual and practical needs of both monastic and lay communities. Now let me examine the Mergen Gegen's liturgical texts in Mongolian language for services.

2. Liturgical texts

Most of the texts in the *CW4* are liturgical manuals and chants. It comprises 147 texts divided into five volumes. Vol. I includes 65 texts for 'taking refuge', 'offering to the lama', 'lama yoga', 'clear realisation of tutelary deities', 'guardian of doctrine' (*idam Nom-un Sakigulsun-u ile onul*), 'eulogy', 'supplication', 'ablution', *chagsom* (Tib. *chagsum*), and instruction (*jakiy-a bichig*). In brief, volume I consists of liturgical texts and monastic regulations. Vol. I provides a lot of information for identifying the distinctive features of the Mergen Tradition. The texts on 'taking refuge', 'Lama Yoga', 'clear realisation on tutelary deities', 'eulogy' and 'supplications' give a clear lineage of the Mergen Tradition, involving deities including the local ones. The texts for monastic regulations illustrate the Mergen Gegen's innovation, systemisation and formulisation of the practices.

Vol. II includes eleven texts about Yamantāka Vajrabhairava Tantra. They are works of 'taking refuge', 'prayers', 'benediction', 'meditation', 'consecration' and 'maṇḍala' of Vajrabhairava. The fact that a whole volume of works is dedicated to Yamantāka Vajrabhairava Tantra shows the importance of the tantra to the Mergen Tradition, and the concrete connection of the Mergen Tradition to the Neichi Toyin who mastered the tantra.

Vol. III contains thirty-nine works on wrathful deities and magical practices. They include texts on the Single Hero Yamantāka, wrathful deities, malign torma (*sur*, Tib. *zor*), exorcising image (*lingga*), incense, and sacrificial cake offerings (*bsang torma*).

Vol. IV contains twenty-three works on consecration of images (*Rabnai*, Tib. *rab gnas*), making Maṇi pills, medicine, astrology and offerings. It also includes local deities and local rituals. In brief, Vol. IV consists of miscellaneous practical texts.

Vol.V contains nine texts of which most can be categorised into vol.1 according to their contents. Only the first text, V-1, 'Empowerment (*dbang*) of glorious Vajrabhairava' is an important supplement to the texts in vol. II.

As an analytical means, let me classify this large number of liturgical texts into certain categories.

1. Taking Refuge (*itegel*)
2. Prayers (*irügel*)
 - 2a Supplication prayers (*jalbaril*)
 - 2b Aspiration prayer (*irügel*)
 - 2c Verses of auspiciousness (*öljei ögülekü*)
 - 2d Supplication to remain stable (*batu orushil*, Tib. *zhabs brtan*)
3. Eulogies (*maḡtaḡal*)
4. Offering (*takil*)
 - 4a General offering
 - 4b Maṇḍala offering (*mandal ergükü*)
 - 4c Sacrificial cake offering (*baling ergükü*)
 - 4d Incense offering (*sang*, Tib. *bsang*)
 - 4e Tea offering (*chai-yin takil*)
 - 4f Food offering (*chab-un takil*)
5. Confession (*namanchilal*)
6. Lustration (*ukiyal*)
7. Gratification (*khangḡal*)
8. Exorcism (*zor lingga*)
9. Consecration of images (*amilakhu, rabnailakhu*, Tib. *rab gnas*)
10. Empowerment (*wang*, Tib. *dbang*; *abishiḡ ögkü*, Skt. *Abhiṣeka*)
11. Other ritual (*jang üile*)
12. Meditation (*bishilḡal*)
 - 12a Clear realisation (*ile onul*)
 - 12b Yoga
 - 12c Evocation (*bütügel*)

1. Taking refuge: there are three texts for 'taking refuge': ordinary reading for taking refuge (I-1) an explanation for taking refuge (I-2) and 'the Tibetan way of taking refuge' (II-1). This means that Mergen Gegen's refuge text is different from the Tibetan one.

2a. Supplication prayers: supplication prayers are applied to request blessings from mostly the root lamas of consecrations of specific practices and some other specific lamas. There are the root lamas of the consecration of Yamantāka with Thirteen Retinues (II-2), the root lamas of great glorious Vajrabhairava (II-4), the root lamas of the consecration of Single Hero Yamantāka (III-1), the root lamas of the consecration for longevity (I-32), the root lamas of the consecration of Abhayākara (I-33),¹⁵⁵ the root lamas of the consecration of Mitrajoki (Mitrayogin, Tib. Mitra dzo ki byams pa'i dpal) (I-34), Second Tsongkhapa (First Neichi Toyin) (I-3), the reincarnations of Neichi Toyin (I-36), the Khubilgan Lama (I-42), the Shiregetü Gütüshi (I-50). There are also supplication prayers to Goddess Tārā (I-24) and Lord Śākyamuni Buddha (I-26).

Several petition prayer texts called *solka* (Tib. *gsol kha*) may also be classified into this category because they have meaning of supplication. They are petition prayers to victorious goddess (*rgyalmo*) (III-24), guardian spirits (III-25), oath-bound deities (*Dam can rdo rje legs pa*) (III-26) and Rāhu (III-27).

2b. Aspiration prayer: Aspiration prayers are actually wishes for the future, usually wishing to be born somewhere, to do something, to be someone etc. in the future life. There are King of aspiration prayer (*irügel-un khagan*, Skt. *prañidhāna rāja*) (V-3), aspiration prayer to Maitreya (*Maidari-yin irügel*) (V-4), meritorious wish prayer (V-5), Aspiration prayer to Tsariyabadari (*Tsariyabadari -yin irugel*) (V-6), Aspiration prayer for Sukhāvātī (*Sukawadi-yin irügel*) (V-7), dedication prayer (*jorikhu irügel*) (V-8), Great prayer (*ülemjite irügel*) (V-9) and aspiration prayers for Shambhala (V-10).

2c. Verses of auspiciousness: There are three texts for verses of auspiciousness: extensive verses of auspiciousness (I-65), verses of auspiciousness to the Guardian Deity with Thirteen Retinues (II-6), and prosperity of religion (V-9).

¹⁵⁵ Abhayakara Gupta was a great writer in Sanskrit and translator in Tibetan. He is credited with the translation into Tibetan of seven works dealing with the *sādhana* of Mahākālāntara, and the like, and with the authorship of twenty six Sanskrit works, all of which mark him out as an authority on Tantra Cult. He was known by the high title of 'Ārya-Mahāpaṇḍita' (Mookherji 1947, 594)

2d. Supplication to remain stable: Supplications to remain stable are dedicated to specific lamas. Some are definitely known as lamas of the Mergen Tradition such as Erdeni Mergen Chorji (I-40), Khubilgan Lama (I-41, 42), Darkhan Chorji Da Lama (I-43), and Emchi Lama (I-49). Others are Lama Sha-Sa-A (I-44), Shiraki-yin Diyanchi (I-47), Ombu Lama (I-48), and Khorchin Shiregen-ü Lama (I-52) who can not be identified. These texts are mostly written at the request of the disciples of the respective lamas according to the colophons.

3. Eulogies: Eulogies are dedicated to the most popular Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, such as Uṣṇīṣavijayā (I-5), Śākyamuni Buddha (I-27), Mañjuśrī (I-28), Maitreya (I-29), Avalokiteśvara (I-30), Amitāyus (I-31), and Tsongkhapa (I-35, V-4).

4. Offering (*takil*)

4a. General offering: There are two texts that are dedicated to the Lama (I-15), and Vajrabhairava (II-11). The offering items are those found in any Buddhist rituals, such as water, flower, incense, lamp, food and drink, perfume, music and gems.

4b. Maṇḍala offering: There is only one text for Maṇḍala offering which is performed when giving consecration (II-10).

4c. Sacrificial cake offerings: Many texts are dedicated to sacrificial cake offering. Two different words *baling* and *dorma* (Skt. *bli*, T ib. *gtor ma*) are used for sacrificial cakes and two different verbs *ögkü* and *ergükü* are employed for 'to offer'. *ögkü* simply means 'to give' while *ergükü* literally means 'to raise', 'to lift' but is used as an honorific for *ögkü* to denote 'a person of lower status who presents something to one in higher status'. So it is often translated as 'to present' 'to offer' in this context. In Mergen Gegen's liturgical texts, *ögkü* goes only with *baling* but never with *dorma*, and the recipients are demons and minor spirits like the masters of water (Tib. *glu*, Skt. *nāga*) (I-58), *bhūta* (I-59), and the master god of place (I-60). The aim of offerings was to gratify them in order to avoid trouble or hindrance from them. Whereas, *ergükü* goes mostly with *dorma* and the recipients are the Buddhist deities proper who are mostly wrathful ones, such as deities like Mahākala (III-8), dharmapālas (III-9), Yama (*Erlig Khan*) (III-10), Great Yakṣa Jamsarang (III-15), Vaiśravaṇa (Bisman) (III-19), Brahma (III-23) and the White Old Man (III-61). The aim of offerings was to gratify and most importantly to please them in order to gain their protection and support. However, there are two occasions where *ergükü* is also used for *baling*, such as another text for offering to Vaiśravaṇa (III-18) and the master of earth (III-30). So *dorma* is used as a superior

offering to *baling* and it is also used in combination with incense offering as *sang dorma* (*bsang gtor ma*). However, all in all, there is a common point for offering sacrificial cakes, that is, a sense of fear and aim to gratify or please the wrathful deities and spirits.

4d. Incense offering: Texts for incense offerings are dedicated to the White Old Man (I-61), the master spirit of *Aguu khoriy-an* (a place name where the Second Neichi Toyin was born) (I-62), the Yellow River (I-63), Brahmā (Eserü-a) (III-28) and King *Pe har* (III-29), *Sülde* (tutelary deity) (IV-13, WC3-b), Mona Khan (deity of Mount Mona) (IV-20) and Chinggis Khan (WC3-a). Incense offerings to the White Old Man (I-61) and Brahmā (III-23) are combined with *torma* offerings. Incense offerings appear to be made to gods of non-Buddhist origin. Incense offering has the nature of purification rather than offering. So, there is no verb like *ergükhu* or *ögkü* used in the titles of these texts. In ordinary language, however a verb *talbikhu* (to make, to emit) is used with *sang* (Tib. *bsangs*). There is a popular version of this practice called *utulga talbikhu* (making or emitting smoke) in the popular religious practices, the purpose of which is to purify any affliction, hindrance and dirt which is usually caused by evil spirits.

4e. Tea offering: There is only one text for tea offering (V-5). Obviously, it is read every day at tea time, which is the most frequent meal in monasteries.

4f. Meal offering: Meal offering is the same as tea offering (V-7). It is read at every meal.

5. Confession: There is only one text of confession of the downfalls (I-4).

6. Lustration: There is one text for the lustration of images (I-53).

7. Gratification: Three texts of gratification are dedicated to Mahākāla (III-4, 7), two texts to the Glorious Goddess (Mon. *chogtu ükin Tengri*, Tib. *dpal ldan lha mo*) (III-of which one is called Glorious Queen with Military Power' (Mon. *cherig-ün erketen khatuḡtai*, Tib. *dGra lha'i rgyal mo*) (III-11, 12), who is said to be the wrathful manifestation of the Glorious Goddess. Gratification involves a fierce offering consisting, for instance, of blood and flesh. Sacrificial cakes (*baling*) are indispensable offering for gratification.

8. Exorcism: There are three texts such as *zor* of Jamsarang (IV-17), sixty *zor baling* (III-20), and ritual of *lingga* (III-21). These texts are used for exorcism that is to drive away evil spirits and hindrances.

9. Consecration of images: There is one text for the consecration of images (I-4).

10. Empowerment: There are two texts for the empowerment of glorious Vajrabhairava (V-1, II-8).

11. Other rituals: Instructions on miscellaneous rituals (Mon. *jang üile*, Tib. *cho ga*) that do not fit the other categories are classified into this category. They are as follows: offering to the Lama (the difference of this text from the text of offering to lama is that the latter one is purely reading and this one includes instructions on performing the ritual) (I-15), method of reciting *Maṇi* (I-18), Magic for calling rain (I-64), reading for Sarvavid Vairocana (IV-3), *Nungnai* ritual (*smyung gnas kyi cho ga*) (IV-4) for the evocation of Avalokiteśvara, ritual for making *maṇi*-pills (IV-5), and ritual of reading the Great Deliverer (*yeke-de tonilgagachi*, Tib. *thar pa chen po*) (IV-6).

12. Meditation

12a. Clear realisation: There is one text on Clear realisation (*ile onul*, Tib. *mngon rtogs*) of the deliverer Goddess Tārā (I-23).

12b. Yoga: Texts involving yoga are all related to lamas such as the Yoga of Holy Lama (I-16), six folds yoga of Vajradhara (I-17), the method of evocation of yoga of indiscriminative lama Hayagrīva (I-19), and lama yoga of the White Mañjuśrī (I-20). It is clear that all yoga texts are in relation to root lamas and Vajradhara often represents one's root lama.

12c. Evocation (*bütügel*, Skt. *sādhana*): There are seven texts on evocation. They are evocation of the White Mañjuśrī (I-21), Sarsvatidevi (I-22), Vajrabhairava with Thirteen Retinues (II-3), summarised method of evocation of the Yamantāka with Thirteen Retinues (II-5), evocation of the Yamantāka with one face two hands (II-7), Vajrabhairava Single Hero Yamantāka (III-2), and evocation of Mahākala (III-6).

From the classification of the numerous liturgical texts, we can see the functions of the different categories and their application to different deities more clearly. Within the different strata of the Mergen Tradition of Buddhist practices, Vajrabhairava tantra appears to be on the first layer. Vajrabhairava or Yamāntaka is the most important deity to which most categories of liturgical texts are employed and a whole volume is dedicated to him. There are prayers, various kinds of offerings including maṇḍala offering, consecration or initiation, methods of meditation or evocation of Vajrabhairava or Yamāntaka. Indeed Vajrabhairava Tantra has always been the main tantric practices

of the Mergen Tradition. Vajrabhairava tantra is undoubtedly the highest yoga tantra, which is also one of the major tantras of Gelukpa School. This will be discussed separately.

The second layer of Buddhist practices in the Mergen Tradition is reflected in those texts related to the wrathful deities. There are liturgical texts for 8 wrathful deities¹⁵⁶ that occupy the central position of the third volume of *CW4*. They are: 1) Yamāntaka, 2) Mahākāla, 3) Yama, 4) Goddess (Mon. *Okin Tengri*, Tib. *Lhamo*, Skt. *Devī*), 5) Hayagrīva (Tib. *Rta-mgrin*), 6) Vaiśrāvaṇa deva (*Bisman Tengri*, Tib. *rnam sras*), 7) Jamsarang (Tib. *Lcam sring, beg tse*), 8) Brahmā (*Esrü-a*, Tib. *tsangs pa*).¹⁵⁷ Categories of liturgical texts devoted to them are quite different from those to Vajrabhairava. They are sacrificial cake offerings (to Mahākāla, Yama, Jamsarang and Vaiśrāvaṇa), incense offerings (to Brahmā), gratification (to Mahākāla and Devī), *zor* (of Jamsarang), Prayer (to Hayagrīva), yoga (of Hayagrīva), and evocation (of Mahākāla). In general, the liturgical texts dedicated to this group of deities are more of exorcism and pragmatic. Among them Mahākāla stands out to be most important because more liturgical texts are devoted to him. There are four texts of sacrificial cake offering, gratification and even evocation of him. Especially, text III-4, 'Readings for the gratification ritual for sacrificial cake offering to the quickly responding refuge'¹⁵⁸ is so comprehensive that it contains most components of a typical liturgical text, for instance invitation (*jalalga*), self generation (*öber bosgakhu*), blessing (*adistad*), offering (*takil*), confession (*namanchilal*), gratification (*khanggal*), sacrificial cake offering, food offering (*segder*), *dhāraṇi*, averting (*khariḡulga*), instruction (*jakiya*), eulogy (*maḡtagal*), exhortation (*duradkhal*), empowerment (*erkeshil*) and verses of auspiciousness. In comparison to the Vajrabhairava tantric practices, of which spiritual or magical accomplishment (*shidi*) is prominent, for the practices with the wrathful deities, the function of protection and elimination of hindrance, disasters or whatever the evil forces that may harm the individual or community as a whole are predominant. So, there are more liturgical texts for offering to these wrathful deities. Only by pleasing

¹⁵⁶ Wrathful deities (Mon. *dogshid*, Tib. *Drag gśed*) is a general term that refers to a group of fierce deities or gods. The number of the group is said variously, eight (Chandra Das 1902, 684), nine (Pozdneyev 1978, 403) and ten (Naranbatu 1997, note 3).

¹⁵⁷ Pozdneyev listed only seven *dogshid* while he claims there were nine. There is White Mahākāla instead of Hayagrīva in his list in comparison to Mergen Gegen's list.

¹⁵⁸ Here Mahākāla is called *türgen itegel* meaning quickly responding refuge.

them, may they be utilised for spiritual or worldly purpose. The eight wrathful deities occupy the position secondary to Vajrabhairava in the Mergen Tradition.

The third layer of practices is meditation on individual Bodhisattvas and deities. For example, clear realisation (*ile onul*) of Goddess Tārā, evocation (*bütügel*) of Avalokiteśvara, White Mañjuśrī, Goddess of Melody, Goddess of Eloquence (Mon. *Egeshigtü Eke*, Tib. *Dbyang can ma*, Skt. *Sarasvatī Devī*). The deities concerned here are mostly peaceful ones (*amurlinggui burkhan*). So these texts are aimed to the practices of spiritual accomplishment.

Prayers occupy the largest number of texts, and are addressed to most of the objects of worship. In fact, there are components of prayers almost in all the texts. The deities who receive other categories of liturgical texts, such as the wrathful deities also receive separate prayer texts. However, some Buddhas and peaceful deities receive prayers and eulogies separately, for example, Buddha Śākyamuni, Amitāyus, and Maitreya, whereas Uśñīśavijayā and Tsongkhapa receive eulogies only. However, there are still components of prayers in the texts titled as eulogies. Quite a few objects of worship receive prayers only, for example, *Abhayakara*, *Mitrayogin*, Victorious goddess (*rgyalmo-yin sulka*), Great King Spirit (*sakigulsun yeke khagan*), Rāhu, Sarvavid. Prayers or supplication to remain stable are also dedicated to lamas of the Mergen tradition, such as the Holy Lama (Neichi Toyin), Erdeni Mergen Chorji, Khubilgan Lama, Shiregetü Güüshi, Darkhan Chorji Da Lama, Lama Sha Sa A, Shiraki-yin Diyanchi, Ombu Lama, Emchi Lama, Shiregen-ü Lama, Khorchin Shiregen-ü Lama and Mergen Gegen.

If the liturgical texts are divided into readings, rituals, and meditations, we can see the layers of the Buddhist practices of the Mergen Tradition from another angle. Those that go under the heading of readings are Refuge, Prayers, Eulogies, Confession; those under rituals are Offerings, Lustration, Gratification, *zor lingga*, Consecration of images, Empowerment, Exorcism; and those under Meditation are clear realisation, Yoga and Evocation. However, meditation texts often include certain types of components from the former two types, and certain types of readings are often indispensable parts of them.

The types of liturgical texts vary from simple to complex, from more verbal to more active, and more of exorcism along the variation of the objects of worship from more celestial Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to worldly protective deities and guardian

spirits, from peaceful deities to wrathful ones. A type of text that can be regarded as the simplest, plainest and having the least magical influence and exorcist power is the eulogy. Eulogies are only dedicated to celestial, universal and peaceful Buddhas like Śākyamuni, Amitāyus and Maitreya. As for Tsongkhapa, Mergen Gegen says he eulogises Tsongkhapa in order to gain merit. While supplication prayers are indispensable components of most of the texts, the separate supplication prayers are again only dedicated to those celestial Buddhas and Bodhisattvas as well as worldly lamas in relation to the Mergen Tradition. While there are texts for many kinds of offerings, there is no specific text for offering to any of the celestial Buddhas and Bodhisattavas. Most texts have the sections of offerings to the collective assemblage of all the objects of worship in which the celestial Buddhas and Bodhisattavas are included. Conversely, the protective and wrathful deities, some of which are celestial and some worldly, often receive many kinds of liturgical texts and much offerings. In addition the latter group of deities are evoked for many practical purposes. This could be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, because of the peaceful nature of this group of deities, there is no need to perform other rituals to please or gratify them for their protection and help. They are always merciful, compassionate and blissful. They have no rage and no punishment. Mere respect and admiration of them will benefit people because faith is rooted in them. In other words, worshipping them is more to do with the matter of dealing with generating faith and dealing with the minds of worshippers. Conversely, the wrathful protective deities and guardian spirits function on the basis of pleasing and gratifying them with many kinds of offerings and by a variety of ritualistic means. Otherwise, not only is there no protection but also negligence and offence may arouse their rage and punishment. They can also be utilised in eliminating harm, disasters and hindrances through performing these rituals.

We can conclude from monastic services and Mergen Gegen's liturgical texts that the Mergen Tradition is a complex, multi-layered and systematic set of practices that range from everyday prayers to the highest yoga tantra, in which numerous Buddhist deities and a large variety of liturgies are engaged. It can be seen as the reflection of Mongolian Buddhism at local levels just as "it is evident that the *Kriyāsaṅgraha* reflects the entire spectrum of Indian Buddhism which was practised at the time of its composition" (Skorupski 2002: 8).

3. Tantric practices

Tantra or Tantrism refers to teachings and practices, which are common to Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism and are based on a sophisticated esoteric anatomy comprising energy centres connected by channels. Tantric practices include worship and yoga (Bowker 1997: 948—950). Buddhist Tantra or Tantric Buddhism, which is also called Tantrayāna, Mantrayāna, Secret Mantra, Esoteric Buddhism and the Diamond Vehicle, is the final phase in the history of Buddhism which Tibetans inherited and developed.

Tibetans took for granted what was then already an Indian Buddhist assumption, that there were, in general two approaches towards Buddhahood. The slower but surer way was as taught in the Mahāyāna sūtras, i.e., the way of the Bodhisattva, and the more risky approach was as taught in the tantras. Through tantric practices, it is believed that one can achieve Buddhahood in a single lifetime. However, only those with strong faculties should dare to use such methods (Snellgrove 2004: 118).

The difference between tantric Buddhism and earlier forms of Buddhism derives from its use of incantation and ritual which involve mystery, magic, evocation, meditation and the use of amulets and maṇḍalas. While all schools of Tibetan Buddhism highly esteem tantric practice, in Gelukpa tradition tantra cannot be practised without a certain level of attainment in doctrinal studies.

Tantra in Mongolia in general

Mongolian Buddhism has been Gelukpa-dominant Buddhism that claims to be a combination of sūtra and tantra on the premise of highly esteemed scholarly approach. While there have been many distinguished Mongolian Buddhist scholars, tantrism has also been widely practised. However, in comparison with other scholarly works and achievement, Mongolian tantric practices and achievement are not well documented. This may be because of the two different dimensions of open scholarship and secret tantric practices: scholarly works were intended to be public whereas tantric practices were intended to be private. However, in the catalogue of old Mongolian books (Ürinkirag-a 1999), there is still a large number of liturgical texts which are related to tantric practices. In the Mongol Buddhist texts it appears that both the Sanskrit term 'tantra' and a Mongolian word *ündüsü* (literally means root) are used for tantras, and a more popular term, *nigucha tarni-yin kölgen* (*Guhyamantrayana*), means 'secret mantra vehicle' and *vchirtu kölgen* (*Vajrayāna*) are also used. However, it seems that none of

these terms have been used among ordinary people as general terms. Instead, many specific words have been used for all kinds of tantric practices. The most popular ones are *tarni-yin ubidis*,¹⁵⁹ *bishilgal* (meditation), *ubidis bishilgal* (meditation on *upadeśa*), and *bütiügel* (evocation). In general, tantric practices in Mongolia can be divided into three levels. Firstly, in the major monasteries, the Gelukpa procedure of learning *sūtra* prior to practicing tantra is strictly followed (Bulağ 2003: 419). This is because Gelukpa School considers that *sūtra* is fundamental and tantra is the higher path. Tantra cannot be practised without a certain level of attainment in doctrinal studies. Pozdneyev notes

All lamas who enter the *khit*¹⁶⁰ (there were only 23 of them in all the Chahar nomadic lands in 1878) come here after first having studied higher dogmatic of Buddhism in philosophical (*tsanid*, Tib. *mtshan nyid*) schools. They usually come at the age of 35 to 40; *diyanchis* of 30 appear very seldom, and under 30 not at all (Pozdneyev 1978: 281).

Pozdneyev's observation about the tantric practitioners or hermits (Mon. *diyanchi lamas*) in Mongolia is a rare material (Pozdneyev 1978: 280–314) because, apart from the *sādhana* texts, we do not know much about what the actual tantric practices were like in Mongolian Buddhism. Tradition has been almost disrupted and there is no documentation of this aspect. What we talk about here is based on fragmentary information found in the modern records of certain specific monasteries most of which are interviews with old monks rather than investigating actual practices as did Pozdneyev.

There were special tantric colleges (or department) called *jodba* (Tib. *rgyud pa*) *rasang* (*dasang*, *datsan*, Tib. *grwa tshang*), *ağba* (Tib. *Sngags pa*) *rasang* or *ahui* (*Sngags rgyud*) *rasang* in most monasteries which have more than two *rasang* divisions (Bulağ 2003: 403). For example, Badgar monastery had *Choir-a* (Tib. *Chos grwa*) *rasang*, Duinkhor (Tib. *dus 'khor*) *rasang*, *Ahui* (Tib. *Sngags rgyud*) *rasang* and Lamrim *rasang* (*Lamrim grwa tshang*) (Selhejab & Oyunbilig 1991: 49). Dembereltü barağun keid in Alasha league had four *rasangs* (Jialasen 2003:6). However, they had a medical department called *mamba rasang* (Tib. *smān pa*) instead of Lamrim *rasang*. Shiregetü Juu had two *rasangs* of *choir-a* and *jodba* (Bulağ 2003: 404). Not all but some

¹⁵⁹ *Ubidis* came from Sanskrit *upadeśa* but it refers to magical power among ordinary Mongols and *tarni-yin ubidis* means magical power of *dhārāni*.

¹⁶⁰ Pozdneyev writes in his glossary "*khid*, *khit* (Mo. Keid) a low-ranking shrine or temple, sometimes containing only a single lama hermit or contemplator-monk" (Pozdneyev 1978, 679).

monasteries gave the *agramba* (Tib. *Sngags rams pa*) degree to those who had completed their courses in the *jodba rasang* and qualified.

Secondly, the minor monasteries, which occupied the majority of the monasteries in Mongolia, neither had *rasang* divisions nor awarded degrees. There is neither study nor record about the specific content of practices of such monasteries. Sūtras and tantras might have been learnt and practised simultaneously. Mergen Monastery is one of such monasteries.

Thirdly, tantra has also been practised by lay Mongols in a very popular manner. The basic forms of practices are keeping a family altar and making offerings to consecrated (*rabnailagsan*, Tib. *Rab gnas*) images of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and guardian spirits; carrying Buddhist images and inscription of incantations; keeping consecrated emblems within their homes in order to expel evil and protect the family; making prostrations; circumambulation around monasteries or stupas; making pilgrimage by prostration (*unaju mörgükü*) to Buddhist holy places such as Wu Tai Shan in Northern China, Kumbum, Labrang, or even to Lhasa¹⁶¹; counting prayer beads, reciting incantations (*mantra or dhārani*) of various Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and other protective deities which were formally taught by a lama;¹⁶² receiving blessings from lamas or holy objects; inviting lamas to read sūtras; and inviting lamas to perform exorcising rituals. Apart from these Buddhist tantric practices, people also invited lamas to perform popular rituals, which are in essence making use of the lamas' tantric power. It is useful to reiterate here why inviting lamas to read sūtras has a tantric implication. Firstly, the purpose of having a sūtra read is not for learning the content and meaning of the scriptures but for the purpose of gaining something beyond the meaning. Taking Kanjur, for example, the purpose of having read it was to accumulate merit, most importantly for prosperity, security and health. Sometimes instead of reading Kanjur from the beginning to the end over several years, people finished reading it by selecting

¹⁶¹ *Unaju mörgükü* refers to people doing prostration step by step without interruption until reaching the destination. As it took many days and then carried their necessities in a backpack, they would put their package at some distance ahead and walk back and make prostration to it, then move it again forward at some distance and come back to do the prostration again. When they found some proper place to sleep overnight ahead or behind the spot they had prostrated to, they would return the next day to continue their prostration from the spot. Once, a determined old woman from Naiman Banner was robbed on the way close to her destination, Wu Tai Shan, so she went back and made all the preparations and started the prostration again from home and completed it (from personal conversation with my husband's family).

¹⁶² One of my personal lamas of *dhārani* teaching asked me to take three vows for abstentions, but others did not require so. He told me that if I broke the vows, I would go to Hell. That lama always did the same when he taught *dhārani* to other people.

several texts from different volumes within several days; or even flipped over the pages of all the volumes of Kanjur once at a time. For the same purpose, at the end of reading the Kanjur, there would be a feast and people would carry a volume each and go around the settlement of the family three times clockwise. Having other tantra related texts read was more popular and the purpose was explicitly for exorcism. Some texts were read at a certain time and this was called 'having duty read' (*jishiy-e ungshigulkhui*). 'Duty' here means that the given texts were read once at a certain time every month, every season or every year. What texts to be read would be decided by high lamas and they usually were *Altangerel* (Skt. *Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra*), *Badmagatang* (Tib. *Pad ma bka' thang*), *Banzaraḡcha* (*Pañca-rakṣa*), *Jaddungba* (Tib. *Brgyad stong pa*), and *Sungdui* (Tib. *Gzungs bsdus*). Some families had *Tarbachimbo* (Tib. *Thar pa chen po*) read (Naranbatu 1997: 179–182).

Tantric practices of the Mergen Tradition

It has already been seen that the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism originated from Neichi Toyin's *diyanchi* tradition, a distinctive tantric tradition. The First Neichi Toyin was a great tantrist. When he converted the eastern Mongols, he mainly relied on his tantric power to overthrow the powerful shamans. Then, the First Mergen Diyanchi was said to be the first of the major disciples of the Neichi Toyin. There is no specific record of the actual practices of Mergen Diyanchi. In *DCH*, it is said that the First Neichi Toyin trained his thirty major disciples in the generation and completion stages of unprecedented Yamāntaka. Mergen Diyanchi was among them (*DCH*: 128). We can also see that he was a tantrist because not only was he the Neichi Toyin's major disciple but also he was called *diyanchi*, a hermit lama. Then, it is clearly noted in *CHJ* that the Second Mergen Diyanchi practised the two tantras with the Second Neichi Toyin (Altanorgil 1989: 225). Just before the Second Neichi Toyin died, he appointed some of his major disciples, headed by Bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho, to teach the junior disciples. He also stressed that among the numerous deities, Vajrabhairava and Guhyasamāja were their traditional major deities (Altanorgil 1989: 234). In the Third Mergen Gegen's works, tantrism still occupies a predominant position. The tantric tradition was transmitted through the internal guru-disciple relationship to the Third Mergen Gegen. The First Chorji Baḡshi Ögligündalai made the Second Mergen Diyanchi his teacher and became qualified in sūtra and tantra. The Third Mergen Gegen Lobsangdambijalsan

worshipped him as his lama and also accepted teachings on sūtra and tantra. Therefore, he called Ögligündalai in his writing 'Vajradhara' (DB: 184). The designation 'Vajradhara' is significant here. While Vajradhara is the supreme tantric Buddha, one's root lama, the principal tantric lama is often referred to by his disciples as Vajradhara.¹⁶³

Mergen Gegen's works appear to be written for the actual practitioners of the Mergen Tradition of Buddhism in comparison with most other collected works that are intended for wider readership and circulation. If we take a broader definition, counting all those liturgical texts that aim to communicate with deities by means of influencing them, for instance, drawing their attention, pleasing, moving, beckoning, evoking them, identifying oneself with them, a large portion of Mergen Gegen's collected works are tantric in nature. In addition to the second volume of *CW4*, which consists of 11 texts about Vajrabhairava tantra, all the other three volumes also contain many liturgies which are essentially tantric in nature. In general, Mergen Gegen's collected works are centred in tantra, just as 'From the perspective of Buddhist teachings, the *Kriyasaṅgraha* is rooted in tantra doctrines and practices, in particular the Yoga Tantra teachings but, as was said earlier, it is not exclusively a tantric work in a restricted sense' (Skorupski 2002: 10).

Text I-14. 'Record of the *Janhkhan* (Tib. *gtsang khang*) temple of Mergen Monastery' relates the process of building the temple of the wrathful deities in Mergen Monastery¹⁶⁴. It states,

Following an open hint of *Damjin Dorlig's* (*dam jan rdo legs*) protection, and his instruction given through possessing a human body about what to be adopted and what to be abandoned, painting, statues, ornaments and weapons of the protective deity were made. After that, with the instruction of the great protective deity, the Goddess, Duke Darmakirdi and other nobles made the temple (*rdin mkhar*)¹⁶⁵ of the protective deity and *dge bshes* Lama of dGa' ldan

¹⁶³ 'Vajradhara is considered inseparable from one's own principal teacher. ... Because Vajradhara and one's root guru are inseparable, the practitioner may visualize Vajradhara with the guru's face and demeanour. ... The inseparability of the guru and Vajradhara points to a critical theme in the Vajrayāna. For whatever practice one is carrying out, the Buddha or *yidam* is always seen as inseparable from one's teacher. This is because it is only through the guru that one is able to encounter the dharmakaya buddhas and all the other transcendent realities met in tantric practice' (Wayman 1995:179).

¹⁶⁴ The *dogshid* (Tib. *Drag shed*) Temple in a monastery was usually tended by a special tantric master and not open to public, even to the general monastic community. Only at the time of the *dragshed* service was it open to the public.

¹⁶⁵ This word is spelt wrong. After examining the context I think 'rdo khang' (means stone house) is right as Dr. Bareja-Starzyńska suggested. Such spelling mistakes are common in Mongolian old prints made in Beijing due to Chinese carvers who actually did not read Mongolian.

empowered it by presenting prayer and offering. Long before that, the administrator of the Banner built an *oboo* (stone cairn) and offered it to the monks in faith following the instruction shown by the great Brahma for lifting the spirit of the monks. Hearing that it is good to make a statue of Yama for averting the hindrance of the people and the country, Da Lama Balsang was delighted and immediately offered five *lang* of silver. However, it was not realised and only left as a hope. In the year of the Horse, Günggadorji built the Jangkhan Temple of the protective deities. In the year of the Rooster, Geleg, Tsurum, Buyandalai and Jimbarashi discussed about building the statue of Yama and decided to make meditation deity (*yidam*) and protective deity in the newly-built temple by Günggadorji. A statue of Jamsarang (Tib. *lcam sring, beg tse*) was added by deliberations. With the five *lang* of Da Lama Balsang, ten *lang* offered by Bao Jangjun, fifteen *lang* by the four initiators, a total of seventy-five *lang* silver, a statue of Yama was built at the centre of the temple. At the right side of him, there is the very secret Hayagrīva, Jamsarang, Brahmā with conch-shell shaped hair, *vajrasadhu* Hayagrīva with lion mount; at the left side, Lord of deeds [*üiles-ün khaḡan*], Lord of order, Lord of skill, Lord of body, Lord of mind, and others such as Tsongkhapa, Padmasambhava and Vajra fame [*aldar*]. All these were made with the value of 275 *lang* silver from Günggadorji, by five craftsmen. Even if the Dharma body of Buddhas have no distinction but as the sky, they transform into all kinds of phenomena, such as a rainbow to benefit beings. There are tremendous benefits in making the statues of the Buddhas (CW4, Vol. I: 89r–90v).

We can see from this account that all those statues of wrathful protective deities and a temple for them were built one after another at the suggestion and sponsorship of monastic and lay dignitaries. The sequence of building of them is Vajrasadhu Hayagrīva, Goddess, Brahmā, Jamsarang and Yama. The arrangement of the statues in the temple is: Yama at the centre; Hayagrīva, Jamsarang, and Brahmā at the right; and Lord of deeds, Lord of order, Lord of skill, Lord of body, Lord of mind, and others such as Tsongkhapa, Padmasambhava, and Vajra fame at the left. It is to note that building of the statues of three other wrathful deities, Yamāntaka, Mahākāla and Vaiśravaṇa is not mentioned here.

Vajrabhairava Tantra

As already seen, Vajrabhairava Tantra, one of the highest yoga tantras, was the main tantric practice of the Mergen Tradition, which was claimed to have been handed down from the First Neichi Toyin. What Neichi Toyin practised and succeeded in evocation was Yamāntaka Vajrabhairava and Guhyasamāja Tantras when he meditated for thirty-five years in the mountain to the north of Höhhot. According to *DCH*, obviously Neichi Toyin had fulfilled the evocation of Vajrabhairava Yamāntaka. It is said that when he was giving the initiation of Vajrabhairava in Eastern Inner Mongolia, Neichi Toyin was seen as the Vajrabhairava embracing his consort before the eyes of Prince Jorigtu (*DCH*: 153). He trained his thirty major disciples including Mergen Diyanchi, firstly in generation and completion stages of unprecedented Yamāntaka (*DCH*: 128). Here the word 'unprecedented' might mean either the Yamāntaka tantra had not existed in Mongolia before Neichi Toyin's dissemination, or the way of practising the Yamāntaka tantra had not existed before, and Neichi Toyin invented it. We can recall that when the First Neichi Toyin attended the service in Yeke Juu in Höhhot, and was reading 'Yamāntaka', the Master of discipline of the Monastery came and said what he was reading was not a Buddhist chant. Neichi Toyin replied that the chant he was chanting was not a chant meant for them and went out. This might imply that there was no Yamāntaka practice in Mongolia at that time. The lamas sent by the Dalai and Panchen lamas to Mongolia were not specially denoted as tantric masters but renowned as scholars. After visiting Outer Mongolia, Neichi Toyin meditated on Vajrabhairava with Thirteen Retinues until he succeeded in evocation of it. That is very likely that he spotted the weak point of Buddhist practices in Mongolia and exerted himself to specialise in it.

However, Vajrabhairava Tantra and the deity Yamāntaka became very popular among the Mongols. There are up to 211 entries related to Vajrabhairava Yamāntaka in the *General Catalogue of Mongolian Old Books in China* (Ürinkiraḡ-a 1999). Of course, many are duplicate copies. However, duplicates could also suggest popularity. In fact, those are only the entries of independent prints and do not include those included in any collected works. There must have been many more texts on this tantra because the catalogue only includes works that survived the Cultural Revolution in China. There would be more if we counted those in Mongolia, Buryatia and Khalmukia as well as those in the libraries in other countries. It is not surprising that Vajrabhairava Yamāntaka

is so popular among the Mongols because he is one of the most venerated deities in the Gelukpa School (Tucci 1989: 76; Siklós 1996: 11). In addition, Neichi Toyin's activities and the Manchu Emperors' connecting themselves to Mañjuśrī, therefore to Yamāntaka¹⁶⁶, made this deity more popular among the Mongols. Based on Heissig (1953), Siklós mentions Neichi Toyin's dissemination of the Vajrabhairava tantra among eastern Mongols (see Chapter 3.1 and Siklós 1996: 12–14). Lessing depicted the Manchu connection with the deity Yamāntaka (Lessing 1942). In fact, the Manchu connection to Yamāntaka was performed mostly by the Mongolian Buddhist community. However, the texts regarding the particular tantra of the Glorious Vajrabhairava with Thirteen Retinues are very few in the above-mentioned catalogue. It appears that the texts in Mongolian about this practice have three sources: 1) Translation of Tsongkhapa's collected works; the collected works of the Second Jangjia Khutugtu Agwanglobsangcholdan's (Ngag dbang blo bzang chos ldan) and the collected works of Mergen Gegen Lobsangdambijalsan. Each of these lamas' collected works contains numerous texts related to the tantra of 'Vajrabhairava with Thirteen Retinues'.

In this section, I will look at Mergen Gegen's works on 'Vajrabhairava with Thirteen Retinues' to see if there is anything distinctive about them. Among the eleven works of taking refuge, prayers, benediction, method of meditation, consecration and making Maṇḍala of Yamāntaka Vajrabhairava tantra in *CW4*, nine are included in volume II, and two in volume III. The Latter two are on the single hero Yamāntaka. The eleven texts are:

II-2. Prayer to the root lamas of the consecration of 'Yamāntaka with Thirteen Retinues' (*Arban gurban burkhantu yamantaka-yin abishig-un ündüsün blam-a nar-un jalbaril kemegdekü orusiba*)

II-3. Method of meditation on the great glorious 'Vajrabhairava with Thirteen Retinues' (*Yeke choḡtru vchir ayūguluḡchi arban gurban burkhan-tu-yin bütügel-ün arg-a kemegdekü orusiba*)

II-4. Prayer to the root lamas of Vajrabhairava, words of one who is accomplished as a sky-goer (*Vchir ayūguluḡchi-yin ündüsün lamanarun jalbaril oḡtargui-yin yabudal-tu bütügsen-u üge kemegdekü orusiba*)

¹⁶⁶ Yamāntaka or Vajrabhairava is the fierce manifestation of Mañjuśrī (see Siklós 1996).

II-5. Summarised method of meditation on the 'Yamāntaka with Thirteen Retinues' (*Arban gurban burkhantu Yamantaka-yin khuriyanggui бүтүгел-үн арга-а кемегдекü orusiba*)

II-6. Benediction of the 'Guardian Deity with Thirteen Retinues' (*Arban gurban burkhan-tu idam-un irüger öljei ögülekü selte kemekü orusiba*)

II-7. Meditation on the 'Yamāntaka with one face and two hands' (*Yamantaka nigen niğur khoyar gartu-yin бүтүгел кемекü orusiba*)

II-8. Summarised writing about the ritual of giving consecration of 'Great Glorious Vajrabhairava with Thirteen Retinues' to others relying on a maṇḍala drawn on canvas, accumulation of good merit which take effect as soon as one reads it (*Yeke choğtu vchir ayugulugchi arban gurban burkhan-tu-yin büs jiruğ-un mandal-dür shitüjü busud-a abishig ögkü yosun-i tobchi-yin tedüi temdeglen bichigsen ungshigsagar tusatu kemegdekü orushigsan-u eki-yin jüg sain buyan arbidkhal*)¹⁶⁷

II-10. Method of offering maṇḍala when giving consecration (*Abishig-un üy-e-dür mandal ergükü yosun*)

II-11. Recitations for offering to the peaceful 'Great Glorious Vajrabhairava' (*Yeke choğtu vchir ayugulugchi-yin öglige tüleshi-yin aman-u ungshilg-a kemegdekü nügüd orusiba*)

III-1. Prayer to the root lamas of consecration of the 'Single Hero Yamāntaka' (*Gägcha bagatur yamantaka-yin abishig-un ündüsün blam-a nar-un jalbaril*)

III-2. Method of evocation of the 'Great Glorious Vajrabhairava Single Hero Yamāntaka' (*Yeke choğtu vchir ayugulugchi gägcha bagatur Yamāntaka-yin бүтүгел-үн арга-а кемекü orusiba*)

II-3 is the main text in this series, which is found to be most similar to the *Yeke choğtu vchir ayugulugchi-yin бүтүгел-үн арга geigsen Manjushiri-yin tagalal-un chimeg* (Ornament of favour of Mañjuśrī, a clarified method of meditation on the great glorious Vajrabhairava, hereafter, *MTCH*) in terms of content and wording. The differences are:

1, the last part of *MCTH*, concerning how meditation is done using a painted image of the deity on canvas, is not present in Mergen Gegen's II-3.

2, there is a slight difference in the arrangement of some sections in the two texts. For example, the section about offering to the 'Guardian Spirits of Directions' is elaborated towards the beginning of II-3 (*CW4* vol.II: 3v-6v), while *MCTH* only gives a

¹⁶⁷ Text II-9 is a general explanation of the rituals.

very short passage first (*MCTH*: 4r–5v) and a longer section towards the end of it (*ibid*: 30r–35r).

3, some elements which are extensive and detailed in *MCTH* are only briefly mentioned in II–3. For example, *MCTH* describes the consecration of Vajra and bell in detail (*ibid*: 2), while II–3 only briefly says ‘vajra and bell can be consecrated at this moment’ (*CW4* vol. II: 6v) and does not give the actual method of consecrating them.

4, the most distinctive difference is the part for offering to the lineage lamas of the Tantra. In *MCTH*, a long series of names of lamas are listed. It starts from Vajrabhairava and Jñānadākinī), and goes on to Lalitavajra and all the Indian and Tibetan masters,¹⁶⁸ to Tsongkhapa and then on to other Tibetan Gelukpa masters. Here the Gelukpa masters are listed in three separate lineages all of which started from Tsongkhapa. The three lineages are identified as ‘lineage of the Panchen, the all knowing’, ‘lineage of the Second Dalai Lama’, ‘lineage of the ‘Tsondru Phakpa’. In fact in every lineage the first two persons are the same, that is, Tsongkhapa and Kedrub Je. The third person is the same for the last two lineages that is, Sherab Senge. The last persons of all the three lineages are titled *achitu vchir barigchi* (benevolent Vajradhara) by the author. This means that he had received all the three lineages of teachings and the three root lamas who gave consecration of the tantra to him from each lineage are *achitu vchir barigchi* lama to him. Indeed the Jangjia Khutugtu admitted that he received the teaching from all of these three lineages (*MCTH*: 23v–24r). So the lamas he had to mention are many. He suggested that those related to one’s own lineage should be mentioned.

The lineage lamas in II–3 are the same as they are in the first lineage until the Fourth Panchen Lama in *MCTH*. They are from Vajrabhairava and Jñānadākinī to Lalitavajra, then the Indian and Tibetan masters to Tsongkhapa, then Mergen Shiditü Khamug-i Medegchi to Panchen nom-un dhvaja, Yeke Shiditü nom-un Vchir, Ilagugsan Lobsangdongrub, Mergen Shiditü Sangye Yeshe and Getülgegchi Sumadi Dharma dhvaja.¹⁶⁹ After the Fourth Panchen, the lineage lamas specific to the Mergen Tradition

¹⁶⁸ For the origin of Vajrabhairava tantra and the early lineage transmission and lineage lamas, See Tucci (1989) and Siklós (1996).

¹⁶⁹ Mergen Shiditü Khamug-i Medegchi can be *Mkhas grub rje*, Panchen nom-un dhvaja is Chos kyi rgyal mtsan, Getülgegchi Sumadi Dharma dhvaja is the Fourth Panchen blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan. The others mentioned need to be identified through a more extensive comparative study, which I am not able to do now.

are given. They are the All-knowing Lobsang Gyatsho¹⁷⁰, lama Loroi Jamsu¹⁷¹, lama Shashin-u dhvaja¹⁷², lama Danjin Jamsu¹⁷³ and lama Da na Samudra¹⁷⁴ (CW4. vol. II: 38r). Mergen Gegen belongs, therefore to the first lineage that appears in MCTH. This fits the claim that the First Neichi Toyin studied with the Fourth Panchen Lama. However, the First Neichi Toyin is not included in the list of lineage lamas, but the Second Neichi Toyin is included. The reason is because the First Neichi Toyin is not connected to the Mergen Tradition by direct initiation of Vajrabhairava Tantra. As seen earlier, he is connected to the Mergen Tradition through his disciple, the First Mergen Diyanchi. However, there is no clue of the latter's teaching or disciple left in Urad, whereas, the Second Mergen Diyanchi studied with the Second Neichi Toyin and fostered many disciples. As for the Second Neichi Toyin's connection to the First Neichi Toyin's teachings including Vajrabhairava tantra, he received them through his old disciples.

However, the Second Neichi Toyin's lineage connection to Vajrabhairava Tantra is counted through the forty-fourth Galdan Shiregetü. Indeed, he learnt from this lama many things including Vajrabhairava tantra. His biography, *CHJ* states,

In the year of Fire Rabbit [1687], [the Second Neichi Toyin] met the dga ldan Shiregetü ngag dbang blo gros rgyal mtshan, who held the golden seat of Tsongkhapa, the Dharma king of the three worlds in the forty-fourth turn, and took *getsul* vows first and then took the initiation of the Vajrabhairava with thirteen retinues when the latter was invited by the Kangxi Emperor. The dga ldan Shiregetü was renowned as the manifestation of Mañjuśrī. He [Second Neichi Toyin] received the mandate of several deities, for instance, Amitāyus and Medicine Buddha. He also took the initiation of the method of evocation of the Vajrabhairava with thirteen retinues which was compiled by the Panchen bzang po bkra shis (*CHJ*: 196).

Here, we can see a very important Mongolian Buddhist perception of initiation from the complex relationship regarding the Vajrabhairava Tantra lineage. The initiation of the First Neichi Toyin taken from the Fourth Panchen Lama was perceived as invalid for his reincarnation, the Second Neichi Toyin. Even if the Second Neichi Toyin had learnt the tantra from the old disciples of his predecessor, the First Neichi Toyin, it might not be regarded as adequate to take initiation from his disciples. Therefore, he had to

¹⁷⁰ This is the Fifth Dalai Lama blo bsang rgya mtsho.

¹⁷¹ This is the forty-fourth Ganden abbot ngag dbang blo gros rgya mtsho.

¹⁷² This is the second Neichi Toyin ngags dbang blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan.

¹⁷³ This is the second Mergen Diyanchi Danjinjamsu (bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho).

¹⁷⁴ This is the Sanskrit rendering of Ögligündalai, the First Chorji Bagshi of Mergen Monastery. Mergen Gegen called him his root lama.

take an authentic initiation as he did from the high Tibetan Lama Ġaldan Shiregetü Agwangloroijamsu (ngag dbang blo gros rgya mtsho).

We can see from the colophon of *MCTH* that the Jangjia Khutugtu has synthesised the most popular works of the Tibetan Gelukpa masters. They are, according to the information in colophon and the actual text of *MCTH*, Tsongkhapa, Vinaya-holder kīr rti dhvaja (grags pa rgyal mtshan) who was the first of Tsongkhapa's disciples, Ananda pa tra lha btsun, one of eight Bodhisattva disciples, Bu zungs gling, 'brong rtse lha btsun rin chen rgya mtsho blo gros who is mkhas krub Rinboche's (dge legs dpal bzang) disciple and Panchen dharma dhvaja. The Jangjia Khutugtu often uses 'addition' in his text to refer to the parts taken from others' texts apart from Tsongkhapa's *Choġtu arban ġurban burkhantu-yin erdeni-yin khaġurchaġ orusiba* (*Precious box, evocation of the glorious Vajrabhairava with thirteen retinues*, hereafter, *EKH*). That means all the other texts were compiled on the base of Tsongkhapa's one. The Jangjia Khutugtu acknowledges all the references for his compilation. It seems that Mergen Gegen's text is compiled by referring to the same version of *MCTH* because the wordings are exactly the same. In fact, the Jangjia Khutugtu's text was written in Tibetan, and different Mongolian translations of the same Tibetan text always differ considerably in wording.

The colophon of *MCTH* includes the following statement about the translation of it,

Yogi of Yamāntaka, Boġda Neichi Toyin, considering the benefit of religion and living beings in great compassion, taught the method of meditation of this Vajrabhairava with thirteen retinues from the profound and subtle Vajrayana that was not well known in this country. He believed that if the doctrine was translated into the people's own languages it is comprehensible and will always stay in the mind. Thus, he greatly benefited the religion and living beings. However, text and practice separated and became faulty; the readings of different places become more and more divergent. Therefore, the disciple of the holy lama, deputy head governing lama of the capital city, Dbyang 'jarchi has translated the 'Ornament of the favour of Mañjuśrī' [*ülemji Manjushiri-yin taġalal-un chimeġ*] by Jangjia Khutugtu, which was written based on Tsongkhapa's *Precious box*. He also compiled it to match the old Mongolian chanting tune. Shaġshabad Gelong, the Da lama of Yamāntaka Monastery in Beijing had it carved into printing (*MCTH*).

As seen, Mergen Monastery was practising old Mongolian chanting before Mergen Gegen's new chanting. So, Dbyang 'jarchi's (Biligündalai) translation of Jangjia Khutugtu's text with old Mongolian chanting tune could have also been used in Mergen

Monastery. The purpose of Mergen Gegen's text II-3 was not only for the new chanting, but also for something else as the colophon of it states,

The method of evocation of Vajrabhairava came down without fault from the holy people of India to Tsongkhapa who bestowed the *Precious box* and opened the door of various accomplishments [*siddhi*]. It was the Holy Lama [*bogda lama*], the Second Tsongkhapa [First Neichi Toyin] who concretely Mongolised the incomparable method and taught the shortcut to become a Buddha. I have written this because I cannot bear the numerous scholars' respective alterations while the order of the Holy Lama is very pure. Please Holy Lama and protective deity [*yidam*] bear my faults of ignorance if there are any (CW4 vol. II: 50v-51r).

Mergen Gegen wanted the text to be original and the lineage to be kept in a straight line. He did not want any alteration to Tsongkhapa's text including Jangjia Khutuḡtu's synthesis of several texts of different lineages. The parts Mergen Gegen omitted are those Jangjia Khutuḡtu acknowledged to have added from other texts. As for the numerous lineage lamas, these were surplus to the Mergen Tradition. Thus, the lineage lamas in Mergen Gegen's text are fewer and straightforwardly presented, without any explanation as Jangjia Khutuḡtu did.

Text II-2. 'Prayer to the root lamas of the consecration of Yamāntaka with thirteen retinues' (*Arban gurban burkhantu yamantaka-yin abishig-un ündiisün blam-a nar-un jalbaril kemegdekü orusiba*) can further reiterate the lineage of Vajrabhairava tantra of the Mergen Tradition. It has so much in common with the Panchen Lama's corresponding text 'Prayer to the root lamas of consecration of glorious Vajrabhairava (*Choḡtu vchir ayugulugchi-yin abishig-un oir-a ündüsülegsen jalbaril*, hereafter, CWPL-9), ninth text in *Khamuḡ-i ailaduḡchi yeke banchin-u tarkhaḡakhu jarlig-i nigen jüg-tür khoilagulugsan nugud orusiba* (Collection of the separately circulated works of the all knowing great Panchen Lama, hereafter, CWPL). They again start from Vajrabhairava and progress through Jñānaḍākinī and Lalitavajra until Mergen shidi tegüsügsen belge bilig-ün burkhan (Wisdom Buddha). Then Mergen Gegen's text extends the lineage by the Fourth Panchen Lama, the Fifth Dalai Lama, the forty-fourth Galden abbot and three more lamas. They are called: *Bogda* (His Holiness), who is the establisher of the *dhvaja* (ornament, standard) of the Yellow Religion; Mergen Dalai Erdemtü, who is the holder of the religion of the *Bogda* Lama and Erdem Nom-un Öglige-gi Arbidḡaḡchi Dalai. The first person must be the Second Neichi Toyin, because his name is Danbijalsan (Tib. Bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan) which means *Dhvaja* (ornament,

standard) of the Religion. The second person, Mergen Dalai Erdemtü must be the Second Mergen Diyanchi whose name is Dajinjamsu (Tib. Bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho). *Rgya mtsho* is *dalai* in Mongolian. Erdem Nom-un Öglige-gi Arbidgagchi Dalai (The Dalai who increases the giving of knowledge and doctrine) is definitely Ögligündalai (Dalai of giving), the root lama of the Third Mergen Gegen. So, the lineage given here is completely consistent with the one in II-3.

However, text II-2 is very different from *CWPL-9* in wording and format. It is obvious that they are different translations of the same text. However, Mergen Gegen's translation is not merely a literal translation but a more flexible and creative translation, as well as some addition of his own compilation in the end. It is arranged in quatrains with six words in every line and each stanza ends with repetition of the same line 'praying, please bestow [us] the two types of accomplishment (*siddhi*)'. Thus, Mergen Gegen made his own translation by formatting it into his Mongolian chanting patterns.

Text II-4. Prayer to the root lamas of Vajrabhairava, words of one who is accomplished as a sky-goer (*Vchir ayugulugchi-yin ündüsün jerge-dür jalbarikhui ogtargui yabudal-tu бүтүгсен-у үге кемегдекү*) further confirms the point. Again, this text is a new translation of the Panchen Lama's text *CWPL-8* with some addition. In the colophon, Mergen Gegen admitted that he inserted six verses from other people's works that start from a prayer to certain personalities such as the Panchen Lama and following lineage lamas to his principle lama. Then, he compiled 7 more of his own verses of prayers to the lamas started from the Panchen Lama. He claimed that the Vajrabhairava tantra was handed down from the Panchen Lama to the Fifth Dalai Lama, then to forty-fourth Galden Shiregetü, then to the reincarnation of the Second Tsongkhapa, then to his own guru. 'Reincarnation of the Second Tsongkhapa' further clarifies that he was not the First Neichi Toyin, but his reincarnation, the Second Neichi Toyin.

It is clear now that Vajrabhairava Tantra, which Mergen Gegen practised, was connected to lineage, more precisely to the Fourth Panchen Lama through two routes, both via the Second Neichi Toyin. One way is: the Third Mergen Gegen → Ögligündalai → the Second Mergen Diyanchi → the Second Neichi Toyin → old disciples of the First Neichi Toyin → the First Neichi Toyin → the Fourth Panchen Lama; The other way was: the same until the Second Neichi Toyin → the forty-fourth Galdan Shiregetü → the Fifth Dalai Lama → the Fourth Panchen Lama. This means that the same source was handed down to the Second Neichi Toyin in two ways. All in all,

there is not much distinction in terms of method of meditation in Mergen Gegen's texts. It is not necessary to analyse all the other texts about the practices of Vajrabhairava because the 'tantra of Vajrabhairava with Thirteen Retinues' was the main practice of the Mergen Tradition.

CHAPTER 7. Popularisation of Buddhism in Mongolia

Buddhism in Mongolia was not isolated from lay society but closely connected to it. The support of the nobles was not sufficient for Buddhism to become truly rooted in Mongolian society. Without the involvement of the lay community, Buddhism could not have developed to such a degree that one third of the male population became monks. In order to have faith, a general understanding of Buddhism was necessary. How could lay people, most of whom were illiterate, access Buddhism and its profound doctrine? Lay people were involved in monastic services, especially major celebrations such as *Smon Lam* gatherings at the New Year, *maṇi* recitation, and the *cham* dance. Besides sending their sons to study in monasteries, people interacted with monks in their homes, for instance, by providing lodging for wandering monks, and invited monks to chant sūtras or perform rituals for them. Although ordinary people did not understand the meaning of the recitations, they usually had some idea about their purpose. For example, when people go to the *Smon Lam* service, they fulfilled the wish of crawling underneath the cart of Maitreya. They knew the general Buddhist principle that holds Maitreya as the Buddha of the Future. Also, it is quickest for people to be liberated when a buddha is present in the world.¹⁷⁵ People usually have some basic understanding about Buddhist images, paintings and symbols on monastery walls and buildings. For example, the wheel of *saṃsāra* on the wall beside the entrance to the main hall of the monastery is so impressive that becomes a hot topic of pilgrims' conversation. People can extract a lot of essential Buddhist knowledge about the wheel from either the monks or their fellow pilgrims. There were also Mongolian monk-scholars who taught the people. Among them, Mergen Gegen was still in the leading position.

This chapter is to explore the works of Mergen Gegen which contributed to the popularisation of Buddhism so as to transform local society and Mongolian society at large. I will look at the two most relevant products of his effort, popular ritual texts and poetry.

¹⁷⁵ In Inner Mongolia, every monastery and temple has a Maitreya cart that carries the image of the Buddha when it is taken around the outside of the compound of the monastery on ceremonial days. On such occasions, people gather and compete to crawl underneath the cart to ensure that they will be born into the world when the Maitreya Buddha is present in the future.

1. Popular ritual texts

The assimilation of indigenous religious beliefs is always a matter for heated debate when discussing the formation of a new regional or national variation of Buddhism, such as, Chinese (Zurcher 1959), Tibetan (Tucci 1980; Samuel 1993; Lopez 1997; Stein 1972; Tenzin Gyatso 1975; Kapstein 2000) and Japanese Buddhism (Matsunaga 1968). Scholars within Mongolian religious studies have wrestled for many years with the relationship between Buddhism and Mongolian indigenous religious beliefs and the function of this relationship in the formation of Mongolian Buddhism.

During the Mongols' first conversion to Buddhism, many major world religions such as Christianity, Islam, Daoism, various schools of Buddhism, as well as Mongolian Shamanism and other popular beliefs were freely practiced within the empire. However, after the collapse of the Mongol rule over China, Tibetan Buddhism also withdrew from Mongolia. When Buddhism came to Mongolia the second time, the elimination of shamanism, which had constituted the main complex of spiritual beliefs and practices of the Mongols became the target for destruction. Altan Khan of the Tümeds (Jürüנגг-a 1984:121), Abadai Khan of the Khalkhas, Dzaya Pandita of the Oirats and Neichi Toyin among the Khorchins (Heissig 1980: 24–45; 1992: 91) were all proponents of suppression of shamanism. While Neichi Toyin's work to suppress shamanism is considered to be quintessential (Heissig 1980: 36–45), the third Mergen Gegen, who identified himself as the former's loyal successor, is well-known for his popular ritual texts which negotiate with popular beliefs. Scholars use different terms for indigenous beliefs, such as 'popular religion' (Bawden, 1958, 1963), 'folk religion' (Heissig 1980), 'popular ritual' (Atwood 1996), 'elders' religion' (Atwood following Caroline Humphrey's term, 2004: 466). Some scholars do not use any specific term but put all the indigenous rituals, cults and spirits under the general name of shamanism (Tatár, 1976; Banzarov 1981). Some scholars see a contradiction between the Neichi Toyin and Mergen Gegen's standpoints on indigenous religion, as Atwood remarks,

In his liturgy, the Mergen Gegen departed from the previous approach of wiping out the *ongghon* (shaman spirits) and replacing them with Buddhist deities. Instead, following Tibetan precedent, he wanted to see the old *ongghons* put under oath to protect the superior Buddhist faith (Atwood 2004: 347).

Scholars often assume that popular beliefs and shamanism are either one and the same or are discrete and separate sets of practices and beliefs. Tatár writes,

When Lamaism was propagated, its propagators not only said that shamanism was not the true religion and that its bloody sacrifices were sinful, they not only persecuted the followers of shamanism but they identified the gods and master-spirits (*ejen*) worshipped in shamanism with the spirits of Lamaism, in cases of places and mountains, etc. the spirits were identified as Lokapālas, the patrons of the Teachings, etc (Tatár 1976: 2).

By contrast, Bawden says, 'alternatively, a Buddhist veneer of Lamaism is portrayed as covering the truly shamanistic nature' (Bawden 1968–69: 110). Here 'shamanism' tends to be used as a general term for all indigenous religious practices. In fact, shamanism and other popular beliefs are different in practice although interconnected ideologically. It will be useful, then, to do a brief survey of Mongolian indigenous religious practices before looking at Mergen Gegen's works.

Mongolian indigenous religion in the pre-Buddhist era is typically defined as shamanism. The definition of shamanism is still controversial. Broader definitions tend to assume all popular religious activities are essentially shamanic. I prefer a narrower definition for Mongolian shamanism. I agree with Heissig's assumption:

The practices, rituals, performances and any other activities conducted by shamans in an altered state of consciousness, being possessed by *onggot*, the spirits of dead shamans, can be categorised as shamanism. So, the other religious life which did not involve the shamans as performers, but were the concerns of individuals or of the social group involved, the clan or the family belong to 'folk religions' (Heissig 1980: 3). For example, the cult of the eternal blue sky, the veneration of fire, the invocation of Geser Khan and the veneration of the ancestor of the princely family, Chinggis Khan, incense offerings in general to the *Tengri* as well as prayers to hills and mountains and to the powers which dwelt within them, all these belonged in this class of religious activities, as did blessings and curses (Heissig 1980: 3).¹⁷⁶

Although Heissig makes this distinction between shamanism and popular beliefs, many scholars of Mongolian studies often confuse them. This confusion is not without reason. Shamans often performed popular rituals due to their ability to evoke spirits and communicate with supernatural beings. Whereas, popular rituals do not necessarily have to be performed in a trance, anybody can conduct them, as in Dagur shamanism:

The sky was the one who (which) destines, who is the regulator of all birth, growth, decay, death, and rebirth. But the problem, with regard to 'shamanism', was that a shaman's presence was quite unnecessary for the worship of the sky.

¹⁷⁶ *Tengri* refers to the heavenly god, Eternal Heaven, the original Mongolian supreme god. It can also mean master-spirit of a specific place, natural object or phenomenon; blue sky; and weather.

There were many other rituals too, sacrifices to mountain spirits at the *oboo* for example, where other ritual practitioners were dominant and shamans were even excluded' (Humphrey 1996: 50)¹⁷⁷.

The use of ritual specialists conducting ceremonies which do not require a professional is evident in the 13th century. Mongol khans had religious experts, such as Christian, Buddhist, or Daoist priests to pray to their *Tengri* on their behalf, which had previously been the task of Mongolian shamans. So-called 'Praying to heavenly god' was no longer the sole pursuit of shamans but of khans and ordinary people as well.

There were no equivalent terms for either 'religion' or shamanism in the Mongolian language in the pre-Buddhist era. Any religious activities we identify today were thought of as indispensable to the daily life of the Mongols.

Religion was not a specialised institution, separated from other aspects of life, as it tends to be with us (Southwold 1983: 172). The oldest religious and political institutions... were parts of one whole of social custom. Religion was part of the organised social life into which a man was born... to the ancients it was a part of the citizen's public life[...] (Smith 1927: 21 in Southwold 1983: 172).

For Mongols there were ritual specialists, the male *böge* and female *idugan*, whom we now call shamans and shamanesses respectively, who had special abilities to evoke *onggud*, their dead ancestor's spirits. When Buddhism came to Mongolia, Mongols borrowed *shashin* from the Sanskrit *śāsana* to refer to Buddhism as a 'religion'. Buddhism is called *Burkhan-u shashin* (Religion of the Buddha) and Gelukpa is called *Shira-yin shashin* (Yellow Religion). Although Banzarov reported that *Khara-yin shashin* (Black Religion) was used to refer to shamanism in contrast to the Yellow Religion (Banzarov 1982: 56), he gives no evidence for it, and no such source is available to us. It is possible that Buryat Mongols spoke this way, as Banzarov was a Buryat. In general, Buddhism is the only religion as such for Mongols. As Humphrey points out,

"Religion" seemed wrong for ideas and beliefs which are never set out as a general theory and make use of relatively few abstract concepts, for which there is no holy founder, no organised institution, no moral dogmas, and no authoritative corpus of books. Above all, there is no tortuous justification of earlier beliefs enshrined in sacred texts' (Humphrey 1996: 49).

¹⁷⁷ Dagurs (also called Daur) inhabit in Hülün Buir and Heilongjiang Province. Buddhism did not reach Dagurs in Heilongjiang. Although there is a controversy about the ethnic identity of Dagurs, they have had a close interaction with the Mongols throughout the history

Modern Mongol scholars have started to use the term *böge-yin shashin* (religion of *böge*) as an equivalent term to 'shamanism'. Nonetheless, people still popularly say *böge mörgül* (worship of *böge*) instead of *böge-yin shashin*. In the opinion of the Mongols overall, Buddhism and shamanism are different phenomena and perhaps incomparable.

Mongols also do not regard popular ritual as part of any religion in the modern scholarly sense. For them, these activities are only part of everyday life, separate from the business of *böge* and *iduḡan*. To become a *böge* or *iduḡan*, one has to be chosen by the spirits. *Böge* and *iduḡan* have the ability to invoke their ancestor spirits through an altered state of consciousness in order to combat adverse powers and forces including those that cause diseases. They also perform divination. The process of invoking spirits involved a combined performance of singing, dancing and drumming. A shaman's songs usually consisted of inviting their ancestor spirits by describing them in detail, making offerings to them, negotiating with and consulting them, and then sending them away. Popular rituals, by contrast, are mostly for seeking protection through offerings and prayers to the master-spirits (*ejed*) of all kinds of natural objects and phenomena. Both shamanic songs and popular liturgical literature were orally transmitted in the past but shamanic songs were only known by shamans and transmitted from master to disciples, while popular ritual literature could be recited by anybody, just as popular rituals could be conducted by anybody.

On the whole, there has not been as much conflict between Buddhism and shamanism as there was between Buddhism and other major religions, such as Daoism and Islam in other countries. There is no systematic doctrine or institution in shamanism to successfully combat Buddhism. Buddhists easily denied shamanic views about the soul, worship of *ongḡud*, and animal sacrifice and devalued the magical power of the shamans with their doctrinal system, powerful institutions and tantric power. In addition, because of their well-numbered, well-financed missionary work and strong political support for Buddhism, shamanism has not been able to become any great obstacle to Buddhism. So-called 'Lamaist suppression of shamanism', said to have occurred at the beginning of Buddhist advancement in the Mongolian regions, actually served as a declaration of Mongol nobles' abandonment of shamanism and official acceptance of Buddhism. Scholars have exaggerated 'Lamaist suppression'. In fact, it was mostly Mongol rulers, such as Altan Khan, Abadai Khan and Khorchin nobles, who suppressed

and banned shamanism. It seems to me that what convinced ordinary Mongols most effectively to reject shamanism was not only its brutal side of sacrifice, but more importantly the idea of the souls of shamans. In the region of eastern Inner Mongolia I come from, shamans are still active. People do not want to be a shaman, however, because it is said that a shaman's soul can neither be liberated nor reborn but has to stay in the world as a spirit for his successors. It is even harmful to his or her descendents because the soul has to have a successor from his descendents. If the relative chosen by the spirit does not accept it to become a shaman, he or she would die, or be disabled at least. Therefore, people are forced to become shaman when they catch one of the so-called incurable 'shaman-diseases'.¹⁷⁸ In the past only very powerful lamas like Neichi Toyin could cure the 'shaman disease' by removing the spirits. It is said that such lamas could also salvage the spirits, complete cure of the problem.¹⁷⁹ Neichi Toyin said, 'stop worshipping of *onggud* and take refuge in the Three Jewels because the former has no benefit for this life but also will be a great hindrance for eternal salvation' (*DCH*: 140). However, it seems that such an attitude towards shamanism is widespread in other parts of Mongolia as well. For example, when a girl called Tubiin Balchir of Köbsgöl caught a 'shaman disease' when she was nineteen years old, she did not want to be a shamaness because she was a strong believer in Buddhism and worshipped White Tārā. However, her disease became worse and worse and she became penniless until, when she was thirty-one years old, she reluctantly became a shamaness (Bulağ 2003: 103).

After Buddhism became the dominant religion in Mongolia, the Buddhist community actually tolerated shamans and their activities among the lay communities. Shamanism co-exists with Buddhism in some places like Buryatia, Kölün Buir, Köbsgöl and eastern Inner Mongolia. In eastern Inner Mongolia, there are two types of shamans. *Chagan jüg-ün böge* (shamans of the white side) were considered to have accepted Buddhism. Shamans of this kind always prays to the Buddha when they start singing and stands facing inwards when they start dancing. They are more gentle in nature and do not do anything harmful. Shamans of this kind in Hövsgöl Aimag, Mongolia are called

¹⁷⁸ It is commonly said that a person who was chosen by an *onggud* spirit as a shaman often fall very ill and could not be cured by any means. The diseases are varied, but in general, it gets worse and worse and lasts for many years until the person dies if he or she does not accept the spirit and becomes a shaman. Even at present, this phenomenon continues since religious practices have become free in all Mongolian regions.

¹⁷⁹ This is a common view in my region. I heard this saying from my father, whose three uncles were all learned lamas.

'Yellow Shamans' and worshipped in monasteries (Pegg 2001: 141). The other type is called *khara jüg-ün böge* (shamans of the black side), and has made no compromise with Buddhism at all. Shamans of the black side do not pray to the Buddha, they face outward when they dance, are easily offended and do harm to other people (Bulağ 200: 181). People are afraid of them and avoid confronting them. However, the spirits of 'shamans of the black side' are believed to be more powerful than those of the 'shamans of the white side'. They can cure difficult diseases and suppress fierce demons which the 'shamans of the white side' can not handle.¹⁸⁰ Although Buddhism and shamanism contradict each other in principle, and Buddhist institutions have always denounced shamanism, shamanism has still survived in Mongolia. Of course, the social function of shamanism has declined to a minimum as many functions of the shamans have been replaced by Buddhist monks. In eastern Inner Mongolia, the functions of shamans are reduced to healing, driving away evil spirits, and divination. They are excluded from public rituals.

There is not much to say about the integration of shamanism and Buddhism apart from the fact that some Buddhist formulas and terms are mechanically attached to white side shamanic songs. No lamas have ever compiled shamanic songs. No shamanic *onggud* have been adopted into the Buddhist pantheon. Even given the resemblance between the Buddhist *gürtem*, *choijong* and *laiching*¹⁸¹ and the Mongolian shaman, their existence in Mongolia is not the result of Buddhist adaptations of or cooperation with Mongolian shamanism. They are simply the import of Tibetan Buddhist practices no matter whatever the origin of them was. However, for the Mongol Buddhist communities, the distinction between shamans and *gürtem* or *choijong* was clear. For them, shamans simply and wrongly evoke ghosts (*onggud*) and *gürtem* and *choijong* evoke Buddhist deities. Nechung *kuten* (*Gnas chung sku-rten*) of Dharamsala said on this point,

¹⁸⁰ The origin of the division of shamans into white and black sides may need further study. It might be that the division had already existed before Buddhist influence, and when Buddhism became dominant, the gentle natured white side easily accepted Buddhist dominance.

¹⁸¹ *Gürtem*, also *gürten* is a Mongolian pronunciation of Tib. *sku-rten*. A *sku-rten* is the medium to evoke a Buddhist deity or dharma protector, deliver oracles or work miracles. *Choijong*, also *choijin*, is from Tibetan *Chos skyong* (Skt. *Dharmapāla*). A *chos skyong* is the dharma protector or a guardian of the Buddha's teachings. Similarly, *laiching* is from Tibetan *gnas chung* who is the state oracle of Tibet. These terms are closely related, i.e. a *sku-rten* evokes *chos skyong* and *gnas chung*, and the *chos skyong* or *gnas chung* speak and act through the *sku-rten*. In Mongolia, the Buddhist professionals who evoke Buddhist deities are also called *choijong* and *laiching*.

There is a particular danger when someone is possessed by the consciousness of a deceased person. Once attracted to an individual, the entity wants to stay for a long time. It is very dangerous. The entity must be exorcised by a highly realised lama. The lama tells the entity to leave for the good of both the spirit itself and the person who is possessed (Rose 1996: 54).

Hence, it cannot be certain that 'shamanism has adopted Lamaist traits and that Lamaism has incorporated shamanistic customs into present-day Lamaist prayers' as some scholars have suggested (Heissig 1980: 11). Apart from the 'shamans of the white side' who included some Buddhist prayers at the start of their rituals, there were no other traits added to shamanic rituals. They did not evoke Buddhist deities or spirits and did not perform Buddhist rituals.

As for the Buddhist treatment of popular beliefs, it is a different picture. Popular rituals and indigenous gods were treated by the Buddhist community as part of everyday life, just like eating meat for the Mongols. In addition, the Buddhist community could not completely break away from the indigenous belief system, just as they could not give up eating meat, especially when they were so much connected to the lay community. To some degree, even shamans were tolerated as a part of life.¹⁸²

Even though the popular rituals could have been performed without religious professionals, when people invite lamas to conduct them, the function of a lama is the same as that of the shaman. Just as shamans did not need to evoke their spirits to conduct popular rituals, lamas did not earn spiritual achievement from them either. As public rituals are often performed by respected intelligent elders, and private rituals are conducted by heads of the families, people preferred to have their prayers written down in order to make them more standard and efficient. There might be two reasons for doing so. For lay Mongols, *sudur* (sūtra) refers to the Buddhist books which are always in long rectangular loose pages, and they saw that monks reading out of such books in rituals. For them, such books are holy and have magical power. People wanted their ritual prayers to be written into *sudur* by Buddhist monks. Also, not all monks wrote books, but only the learned and powerful lamas. Thus, prayers written into *sudur* by learned powerful lamas were considered to be more effective. Even the monks needed written texts to be read for conducting popular rituals. From the monks' side, performing

¹⁸² I heard from my mother-in law that once the reincarnation lama of the Khulusutai Monastery in Naiman Banner of eastern Inner Mongolia advised a man, who came to ask for help for his diseased family member, to ask the local shaman to perform a healing ritual.

popular rituals were a means to connect to the lay community either for religious, financial or social purposes.¹⁸³

In the final analysis, the Buddhists' performance of popular rituals and tolerance of shamanism might be due to the inclusive nature, philosophy of assimilation (Matsunaga 1968) and practical side of Buddhism (Tambiah 1974; Samuel, 1993). The Buddhist scope of 'all the sentient beings' and cosmology of the universe does not negate the existence of gods or spirits but affirm that they, like human beings, are also bound by the chain of existence and are subjected to suffering no matter what supernatural ability they have. As the aim of Buddhism is to save all sentient beings, there is no boundary of inclusion. This is how Buddhism tolerated indigenous deities, gods and spirits when became a state religion or national religion in places such as China, Japan, Tibet and Mongolia. Even the purportedly more conservative Theravāda Buddhism does so in South Asian countries (Southwold 1983; Tambiah 1974). The task here is to find out how and to what extent Buddhism dealt with Mongolian popular beliefs.

When Buddhism became the predominant national religion in Mongolia, all people became Buddhists even though they had different levels of understanding Buddhism, and different forms of engagement in Buddhist practices when they conducted popular rituals. In this sense, even a shaman can be a Buddhist, just like 'the court "*brahmans*" were also Buddhists' (Tambiah 1970: 256). This is evidenced by a popular old Buryat shamaness who left a wish to be buried in a Buddhist way (Hurelbaatar 2002: 152).

The controversy about lamas' involvement in Mongolian popular rituals especially revolves around the nature of these written works. There are two main opinions. One holds that the Buddhist elements in these texts are only a veneer of Lamaism covering the truly shamanistic nature and 'hence not too much notice should be taken' (Bawden 1968–69: 110). Heissig, who distinguishes 'folk religion' from

¹⁸³ In the past, there was almost no family without at least one monk relative. So, the monk relatives conducted private rituals. As almost every community or administrative unit had its own monastery, public rituals were conducted by the relevant monastery monks. For example, my father-in-law's three maternal uncles were monks and the youngest one stayed in the local monastery. So, he became the *gal-iin maam* (fire-lama; *maam* is an honourific address to a monk) of my father-in-law's family and conducted fire offerings for them every year on the twenty-third day of the last lunar month of the year. A monk was also invited to conduct a fire ritual for a marrying couple and the lama became the fire-lama of the bride. The fire-lama called the bride his daughter and always looked after her.

shamanism, tends to differentiate the 'contaminated texts' from the pure shamanic and popular ritual texts.

Shamanism found it necessary to camouflage itself by adopting Lamaistic preambles, and also the gods from the Lamaist pantheon, and by using the phraseology of Lamaist prayers. In the course of time there developed in this way alongside the pure hymns of ecstatic shamanism those of a "mixed" type and finally those of a fully "Lamaized" type (Heissig 1980: 3).

Heissig considers the Third Mergen Gegen 'distinguished himself particularly in the formation of prayers which united in a syncretic manner ideas and deities of shamanism with Lamaist ritual forms' (Heissig 1980: 44). It should be noted that although Heissig uses 'shamanic' here, his discussion is about folk-religion. Heissig confuses shamanism with folk religion and popular rituals although he tries to distinguish them in the same book.

The second opinion holds that these texts became Buddhist in nature through the lamas' compilation. There are also two different strains for this idea. One is simple and claims that lamas took shamanistic spirits into the Buddhist pantheon. 'They not only persecuted the followers of shamanism but they also identified the gods and master-spirits (*ejen*) worshipped in shamanism with the spirits of Lamaism' (Tatár 1976: 2). Deities from Mongolian practice and rituals were reclassified and absorbed into the Buddhist pantheon (Jerryson 2007: 12). The other tendency is to distinguish 'popular religion' or 'popular beliefs' from shamanism. Bawden senses the necessity of distinguishing shamanism and popular religion, although he is still confused about them.

Lamaism was, at the time concerned, systematically engaged in satisfying the demand put forward by the Mongol nobility for prayers in the tradition of the old animistic religious ideas, by the creation of prayers which took over the popular pantheon into the Lamaist pantheon, and popular religious characteristics into Lamaist ritual' (Bawden 1958: 24).

Reviewing the conversations on this type of text, Atwood presents a thorough discussion of the subject through analysis of the fire ritual. His argument not only involves a wide range of relevant issues in Mongolian religious practices, but also notes the practical aspects of Buddhism. He clears up the confusion between shamanism and popular beliefs. He disputes the notion that all popular Mongolian religious activities are assumed to be essentially shamanistic; rituals practiced widely by the Buddhist Mongols, notably the *obao* and fire rituals, are called shamanist; terming any ritual with practical purpose shamanism and dividing an integral ritual into a shamanist core and a Buddhist veneer (Atwood 1996: 123).

Atwood affirms that Buddhists have different attitudes towards shamanism and popular beliefs.

There is no evidence that the cult of the fire was ever seen as non-Buddhist or ever suppressed by Buddhists. Narrative sources on the Buddhist suppression of native Mongolian cults never mention any target except the shamans themselves and the felt dolls, or *ongguds*, which held the spirits of the shaman ancestors. Similarly legal codes of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries strictly prohibited animal or human sacrifice at funerals, the possession of, or sacrifice to, *ongguds*, the patronage of shamans, or the practices of sorcery but said nothing whatsoever about either the fire cult or the *oboo* sacrifices (Atwood 1996: 130).

Discussing his main topic, the fire cult, Atwood remarks that more than twenty available fire ritual texts explicitly aligned the cult of the fire with the Great Tradition of Buddhism. Mergen Gegen's text on fire ritual is the second of the three types of fire rituals he distinguishes. According to Atwood, there is a large gap between lay and tantric rituals, and Mergen Gegen's text conforms to Buddhist rituals in linguistic and overall structural form, but corresponds to the lay rituals in its manner, purpose and the terms used for the fire god. It can be evidenced by the fact that Mergen Gegen's text IV–21 was intentionally written as popular ritual text and arranged with other popular ritual texts in his collected works. There is no other separate Buddhist fire ritual text in Mergen Gegen's works comparable with the 'Tibetan *homa* rites' described in Skorupski (1995: 2–46). Mergen Gegen was aware that fire ritual belonged to the popular religion, as he admits that fire had been worshipped by all the nations and people, such as Indian, Tibetan, Chinese as well as the Mongols, since the time of their ancestors. His attitude towards fire ritual is consistent with his loyalty to the Yellow Religion, that is, he did not want to corrupt the Buddhism he embraced with any popular ritual elements.

Turning to investigate the nature, function and position of Mergen Gegen's popular ritual texts, scholars often focus on the Buddhist elements in those texts (Heissig, 1980 Bawden 1958; 1961–62; 1968–69; 1976, Atwood 1996, Tatár 1976). Only when these texts are analysed in the context of Mergen Gegen's collected works and his life time endeavour, can their nature be clearly understood.

There are about twenty popular ritual texts included in *WC4*. Most of them are in volume IV, several in volume I, and a few more in *CW3*. They are:

I–58. Ritual for the sacrificial cake offering to the master of water (*luus-un baling ögkü yosun kemegdekü orusiba*)

I-59. Ritual for the sacrificial cake offering to the *bhūtas* (*bhodhinar-tur baling ögküi yosun Kemegdekü orusiba*)

I-60. Ritual for the sacrificial cake offering to the master spirit (*Tengri*) of locality (*orun-u ejen Tengri-dür baling ergükü yosun kemekü orusiba*)

I-61. Incense and sacrificial cake offering to the White Old Man (*Chagan ebügen-ü sang durma kemegdekü orusiba*)

I-62. Incense offering to the master of place of the *aguu khoriy-an* (*aguu khoriy-an-u orun-u ejen-ü sang takil kemegdekü orusiba*)

I-63. One hundred auspice — the incense offering to the Yellow River (*khatun goul-un sang tümen öljei khutuḡtu kemegdekü orusiba*)

I-64. Magic for making rain (*khura oruḡulkhu jada ubadis kemegdekü orusiba*)

III-30. Ritual for offering *baling* to the master of earth (*delekei-yin ejed-ün baling ergüküi yosun kemegdekü orusiba*)

IV-11. Sacrificial cake offering to the oath-bound king of doctrine, *gnyan chen thang lha, rma chen spom ra, mona khan*, master of earth (*tangḡarigtu nom-un khan gnyan chen thang lha, rma chen spom ra, mona khan, delekei-yin ejed-e baling ergükü kemekü orusiba*)

IV-12. Ritual for strengthening (*degjigülkü*) the tutelary genius, called the sun that increases the benefit and happiness (*sülde Tengri-yi degjigülküi yosun tusa jirḡalang-un gegen-i delgereḡülüḡchi naran kemekü orusiba*)

IV-13. Incense offering to the tutelary genius (*sülde-yin bsang*)

IV-14. Ritual for fresh drink libation (*shine shime-yin sachuli ergükü yosun kemegdekü orusiba*)

IV-15. Ritual for collecting of the essence of the herd and beckoning good fortune (*keshig abkhui dalalḡa üiledküi yosun orusiba*)

IV-16. Clear white crystal — ritual and readings for offering to the *oboo* (*obuḡ-a takikhu jang üile ungshilḡa-yin jerge tungḡalaḡ chagan shil kemekü orusiba*)

IV-17. Instruction for erecting an *oboo* (*obuḡa busḡakhu yosun-u jerge orusiba*)

IV-18. Wish granting jewel rosary — offering to the heaven (*Tengri*) and the master of water and earth (*Tengri luus-i takikhu chindamani-yin erike kemekü orusiba*)

IV-19. Wish fulfilling jewel — extensive prayer offering ritual to the glorious Mona Khan (*choḡtu Mona Khan-u delgerengḡüi öchig takil sedkigseger chindamani kemegdekü orusiba*)

IV–20. King of jewel power — incense offering to the glorious *Mona Khan* and the masters of place and water (*tegüs choǵtu mona khan terigüten usun-u ejed-ün sang takil erdeni erketü-yin khagan kemekü orusiba*)

IV–21. Sūtra for fire offering (*ǵal-un irügel-ün sudur kemegdekü orusiba*)

IV–22. Sūtra for prayer for *ger*¹⁸⁴ (*Ger-ün irügel-ün sudur kemegdekü orusiba*)

WC3–a. Incense offering to Lord Chinggis (*Ejen Chinggis-ün sang*)

WC3–b. Incense offering to the tutelary genius of the Lord (*Ejen sülde-yin sang*)

The texts included in volume IV are exclusively indigenous popular ritual texts whereas those in volume I are the rituals also practiced in Tibet. Scholars tend to agree with Heissig's idea that the White Old Man is a typical example of Mongolian folk religious characters that were taken into Buddhist pantheon (Jerryson 2007: 12). Whether the White Old Man is an exclusively Mongolian deity, and if he was absorbed into the Buddhist pantheon (*ibid*), still need further investigation. 'Incense offering to the master of the place called Ağuu Khorıyan' is not lay oriented because it was written at the request of a lama of the newly-built monastery at Ağuu khorıyan where the second Neichi Toyin was born. 'Offering *baling* to the master of earth' in Vol. III is not a popular ritual text either because it is wholly dedicated to the Buddhist wrathful deities.

We can assume that Mergen Gegen wrote those texts included in volume IV for lay community instead of monastic practice. Although some texts were written at the request of monks, the purpose of them was to conduct rituals for lay people. Most texts were written at the request of lay people. Both text IV–12 and IV–13 were written at the request of the Imperial Duke of Urad named Dha. Here Dha stands for Dharmashiri for veneration following the Mongol custom to avoid addressing a superior or elder directly by his or her name. The reason why the duke requested these texts but not other people is that the tutelary genius originally was the guardian of Chinggis Khan's lineage, and all the ruling princes, dukes of banners were supposed to belong to this lineage. Heissig extensively discussed about the tutelary genius (Heissig 1980: 84–89). Text IV–11 was written at the request of Lady Tanadur, and text IV–20 was at the request of the noble, banner governor Gun dka. According to the colophons of IV–16 and IV–17, Mergen Gegen wrote them very reluctantly as he was not able to refuse the demands of worshippers (see Bawden for translation of these texts, 1958). Mergen Gegen might have written some of the popular ritual texts on his own initiative as there is no mention

¹⁸⁴ *Ger* refers to Mongolian tent, also called yurt in Western literature.

of other's request. Such rituals are traditional Mongolian customs, such as fresh drink (*shime*) libation, collecting essence (*kesig*) of herds, beckoning good fortune, fire offering, and prayer for *ger*. Apart from the fire ritual, the other rituals are not intended for specific spirits or deities. Both Buddhist objects of worship and indigenous master spirits are receivers of the offerings and bestowers of good fortune.

There are two texts dedicated to Chinggis Khan: 'Incense offering to Lord Chinggis Khan' (*Ejen Chinggis -ün sang*) and 'Incense offering to the tutelary deity of the Lord [Chinggis Khan]' (*ejen süilde-yin sang*). Both were found in manuscripts and included in WC3. There is no mention of anyone who requested the text (see Heissig for Chinggis Khan Cult, 1980: 59–68). These two texts were not included in CW4 possibly because they were not written for people who are related to the Mergen Tradition. Rather, they were for the Chinggis Khan cult in Ordos where the national and local offerings to Chinggis Khan were conducted at his Mausoleum. Heissig reported the further copying of the texts for Chinggis Khan Shrine in Khalkha Mongolia (Heissig 1980: 64).¹⁸⁵

In Mergen Gegen's text, Chinggis Khan is the great Khaḡan (Khan) of the world empire, the lord of all the Mongols, whose main function is to destroy the enemies, to protect the worshippers from all kinds of danger and harm and to bestow all the good fortune. He is described as the traditional, heroic, powerful, and charismatic leader. He thoroughly destroys the enemy of heretic emperors and leads his country of 'five colours and four foreign subjects'¹⁸⁶, and is the supreme emperor of the eighty-four-thousands.¹⁸⁷ His new function here is to protect Buddhism and destroy the heretic enemy, and this function is but one of his many other traditional functions. The *sidi* (Skt. *siddhi*) does not mean that of religious accomplishment, rather that of all the worldly interests, such

¹⁸⁵ According to Heissig, Chinggis Khan also appeared within the Buddhist pantheon in Mongolia and even Tibet. From the 17th century, Tibetan lamas had identified Chinggis Khan as an incarnation of the fierce bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, just as the Manchu emperor did with Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattva of wisdom. Indeed, there is a saying among the Mongols that 'Avalokiteśvara is the main deity for Tibetans, Mañjuśrī is for Chinese, and Vajrapāṇi is for Mongols. Thus, Tibetans are more compassionate, Chinese are more skilful, and Mongols are more heroic.

¹⁸⁶ In the Mongolian Historical sources all the people under the Mongol rule during the Mongol Empire and Yuan Dynasty were referred to by five colours (Mongols—blue, Turkish—yellow, Chinese—red, Tibetans—black, and Koreans—white) and four foreigners (the other four ethnic groups apart from the Mongols).

¹⁸⁷ Chinggis Khan reorganized the people under his reign into units of thousands and ten-thousands as soon as he united the Mongols. Although it is recorded by Rashid-ud-din that there were 129 thousands people under Chinggis Khan, Eighty four thousands is often used maybe because it is a symbolic number in Buddhism.

as pacification of turbulence and harm, elimination of diseases, restoring fame, appeasement of evil fighting, flourishing of good fortune, increase of wisdom and strengthening of courage and might (CW3: 483–484). So, it is not proper to say that ‘Chinggis Khan has entirely become a protector of Lamaism; His special position in ancestral cult is over’ (Heissig 1980: 64). In fact he is still the ancestor of all the Mongols, the Buddhist Mongols at that time.

Ritual texts for offering Mona Khan, the local mountain spirits, are most relevant to Urad community because Mona Mountain area is the territory of local Urad people where Mergen Monastery is located. There are three texts concerning the Mona Khan. Offering to Mona Khan has been important ritual for Urad people, because when Urad people settled down in the area in 1648, the three banners each chose to offer to a different summit of the Mona Mountain.

IV–11 was written at the request of holy Lady Tanadar, and IV–20 was of the noble, Banner governor Gun dka. IV–11 associates Mona Khan with Tibetan mountain deities gNyan chen thang lha and rMa chen spom ra who were said to be guardians of Buddhism. However, Mona Khan is not referred to as a guardian of Buddhism, rather he is called the ‘Great Hero of Heaven’ (*Tengri*) in this text. It seems that Mergen Gegen was hesitant to call directly Mona Khan the guardian of Buddhism. Instead, he ambiguously associates the Mona Khan with similar Tibetan mountain gods who were claimed to be the guardians of Buddhism. The text beseeches Mona Khan and his companions to eliminate all adverse conditions; create favourable ones as wished and pacify all harm-makers; and asks them not to be angry at the worshippers’ deeds and business but become their harmonious companions. There is no special request for Buddhist purposes in this text apart from the worldly need of ordinary people. However, IV–20 starts with prayers for blessings of Buddhas, Vajradhara and all the blissful ones, Śākyamuni, Padmasambhava and Tsongkhapa. Mona Khan and his companions, the master of the Yellow River, *Tengri* and *klu* (*luus*) of the white side are invited and offered to in a Buddhist way. Then it describes the offerings,

Prepared and purified the sacrificial cake offerings, food and drink with a hundred flavours and multiplied with mind; prepared the sprinkling that gathered a thousand nutrition and was transformed; ornaments; filled the earth, sky and in-between with these offerings and consecrated them with spell, hand gesture (*mudra*) and Samadhi (CW4 IV: 256v–256r).

The requests prayed for are similar to those in IV-11 with an addition of 'as the religious services and the monastery area are entrusted to you, please guard them with their property, and increase their possessions.' The last request is understandable because the governor of the banner should include the benefit of the monastery when he made offering to the Mona Khan, as one who presided over the ritual. The statement 'as the religious services and monastery area are entrusted to you' (CW4 IV: 257v) sounds an already commonly acknowledged assignment. It is possible that the statement stemmed from text IV-19 which seems to have been written before IV-20.

IV-19 makes no mention of anyone requesting the text. Perhaps it was written at Mergen Gegen's own initiative. It is more in Buddhist pattern and very different from the other popular ritual texts. The prescribed ritual is complex and consists of many components. These components includes preparation, purification and consecration of the offerings, invitation of the deities, description of offerings, purification, conversion and confession, assignment of tasks to the spirit, beckoning of good fortune, warning and verses of auspiciousness. There is also a list of all the items used for the ritual attached at the end of the text. The text starts with an instruction for preparation for the ritual, for instance, the Buddha image, offering and washing items, offerings for guardian deities and guardian of doctrine. Then a Buddhist *sādhana* is executed, during which the performer envisages himself to be a deity, and then offers sacrificial cakes to the obstructing spirits and sends them away. Then the performer generates himself to be Vajrabhairava and purifies the offering items with the radiance from the syllable *hum* in his heart, then with Buddhist incantation and *mudra*; prays to the Buddhas, Vajradhara, Śākyamuni, Padmasambhava and Tsongkhapa for blessing; invites Mona Khan who is addressed to be the glorious Mona Khaḡan¹⁸⁸ who dwells in the 'golden palace on the top of the Mona Khan Mountain of the great Mongolian country'. Mona Khan is called a protector of the religion of Blo bzang grags pa (Tsongkhapa), oath-bound companion of the yogi, eliminator of all hindrance of the black side, the completely powerful *Tengri* with his companions: *Tengri* (all kinds of master spirits), *luus* (master of water) and king of the *albino* (demons) and so on. After that, offerings are made. The offerings include

¹⁸⁸ Mergen Gegen used *khaḡan* to distinguish the master spirit of the mountain from *khan* that refers to the Mountain itself. See Tatár (1976) for Mongolian taboo and naming of mountains.

not only the typical Buddhist eight auspicious symbols¹⁸⁹ but also typical lay ones. While there is no animal sacrifice in the way of lay offerings mentioned either in the beginning or in the list of offerings at the end, a bloody sacrifice appears in the procedure of the offering as following:

The blood offering of harm makers and the set of organs,
 The incense of burning fat and the light made of fingers
 The libation of bile and food of meat and blood
 The musical instrument of bones and the ornaments of skin and intestine,
 We are offering to the Glorious Mona Khan and the others (CW4 IV: 245r).

There are also terms like 'violent [*dogshin*] offerings', 'meat offering [*tsaru*]', and 'red sacrificial cake' in the list of offerings (CW4 IV: 253r). These are presented symbolically in the tantric Buddhist way rather than real human or animal sacrifice. There are repetitions of the sentence: 'please be harmonious guardian and protector of us Guru and disciples', after presenting every kind of offering.

We can see in this text Mergen Gegen's attempt to convert Mona Khan into the guardian spirit of the Buddhist community from the sections on consecration, assigning the task and warning. The consecration section reads,

We are consecrating and offering to the glorious Mona Khan and his companions in the same way as the lineage master Padmasambhava did to all the guests of the *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* in the past.' Assigning the tasks includes 'the assembly, the services, and the monastery area are entrusted to the glorious Mona Khan.' 'I, the yogi of the glorious Vajrabhairava, am assigning this task to the glorious Mona Khan.' The tasks are 'Immediately exterminate the enemy of the lama, the destroyer of the monastery, the splitter of the monk community, the harm-makers to all the beings, especially all the enemies and hindrances that have the intention to harm the monastery area and us, yogis. Eat up their internal organs and hearts (CW4 IV: 246v–251r).

Assigning tasks is different from praying. It is more of an order than a request as is clear in the warning,

It will be disobedience to the religious order if you do not fulfil the assigned tasks to you. Then the future yogi will punish you and I, the present yogi [referring to Mergen Gegen himself], will demur you. The sinful ones will be uncontrollable and the *khan* [you] will be no more than a name (CW4 IV: 251r).

So, the function of Mona Khan in this text is to protect the guru and disciples, the yogi of Yamāntaka Vajrabhairava, which is Mergen Gegen. Mona Khan is called the

¹⁸⁹ The Buddhist eight auspicious symbols are listed in the text as following: umbrella of compassion, fishes of wisdom, vase of great treasury, pure lotus, conch of fame, glorious astrological symbol, and ornament of victory and wheel of doctrine.

great guardian spirit, supporter of religion and doctrine (*shashin nom-i tedgüghi*). He is asked to guard the Buddhist community and their monasteries. At the end of the text, Mergen Gegen states, 'Even if there might be some people who do not like this text and want to ban it, there must be some people who will like it and use it.'

This is the farthest degree to which Mergen Gegen's Buddhist transformation of popular ritual and local spirits goes. Mergen Gegen consciously followed the Padmasambhava's example in Tibet to consecrate Mona Khan and his companions to protect Buddhist community. However, his conversion of Mona Khan is different from that of Padmasambhava. Mergen Gegen's consecration and offering were means of friendly conversion and co-operation with local spirits, rather than suppression. There are interesting stories told among Urad people about the friendly relationship of Mergen Gegen and Mona Khan, a personified figure with warrior like appearance, and a *luus*, master spirit of a lake, who is a green snake but can change itself into a woman in green (Möngke 1996: 84–104). So, Mergen Gegen's conversion of local spirits in popular beliefs is also different from Neichi Toyin's suppression of shamanic *onggud*. The latter did not put *onggud* or local spirits under oath to protect Buddhism.

However, this ritual still is not within the scope of monastic services because it is not included in Mergen Gegen's programme of monastic services. Mona Khan is not yet a proper Buddhist deity. Rather, he is still more of a protective spirit of the whole Urad people, of all sides of their life including Buddhism. The request made in the text says,

The Glorious Mona Khan and the others give us the following as you did before,
The golden wheel and wish-granting stone, beautiful wife,
The richness for the head of household and strong elephants,
The intelligent horses and powerful army,

Not only an official title but also the fate of *Cakravartin* (CW4 IV: 245r).

These have obviously been the request of the noble of Urad who represented all the community and hosted the offering ritual to Mona Khan. The reason the text stressed the protection of Buddhism so much is because it was a new task officially assigned by Mergen Gegen. It is a symbol of Buddhist integration into Mongolian culture in general and the local culture in particular rather than Buddhist take-over of shamanic *onggud* and local spirits into Buddhist pantheon. Offering to Mona Khan, as well as other local rituals, are only part of the Urad Mongols' ordinary life. When the Buddhist Urad people wanted to make offering to Mona Khan, protector of the whole community, Mergen

Monastery, as the banner monastery naturally took up the task of conducting the ritual. Mergen Gegen's ideas about popular beliefs and spirit cults can be found at the beginning of IV-18, 'Diamond rosary for offering heaven and master of water and earth',

The Buddha has many skilful means of
Complete taming [the mind of living beings].
He preaches to all the living beings
By perceiving their state of mind,
And decide how to convert them,
By examining the root of their virtue
And different levels of their faith.

He convert
Some of them with bodhisattva,
Some of them with *śrāvaka*,
Some of them with *pratyeka* Buddha,
Some of them with *tengri*,
Some of them with *Indra*,
Some of them with *Esrü-a*,
Some of them with *luus*,
Some of them with magic,
Some of them with emperors.

One can convert the living beings
By turning himself into
The sun, the moon and the *Maheśvara*,
Esrü-a, *Vishnu* and *Indra*.

Like the content of *Bodhicaryāvatāra*,
Depending on the power of one's previous aspiration
That grown out of one's supreme *bodhi* mind,
For the benefit of the living beings,
One can transform anything like
Those have no mind, and in an inanimate nature
Such as a boat, a bridge, a plant or a tree,
The four elements of earth, water, fire and air,
A house, good temple and pagoda,
Even a broken temple and pagoda,
Into buddhas and bodhisattvas.

In 'A stage of understanding all religions without contradiction'
In the *Graded Path* by the Holy Tsongkhapa,
'All' means not only the *sūtra* and *tantra* of our own tradition
But also, in a certain sense, all that is appropriate
In the others' tradition can be taken into the doctrine,
And take the doctrine into the path (*mör*).
Then it will be called 'understanding without contradiction'.

The saviour Maitreya said,
'Remember that the nature of dharma is inconceivable.'
This means that there is no contradiction for

The law of dharma that is inconceivable (CW4 IV: 236v–237v).

Here, Mergen Gegen's idea is clear that anything can be utilised by Buddhism as long as within the framework of Buddhist doctrine and on the right path to serve the living beings. Thus, Mergen Gegen had a conviction that writing texts for popular rituals was in the scope of Buddhist principle and for the benefit of the local people. As a lama, he compiled the texts in the pattern of Buddhist ritual texts. Although Mergen Gegen does use the phrase 'oath-bound protector' once or twice for Mona Khan following the Tibetan example, he only added the tasks of protecting Buddhist community to the local spirits instead of turning them into Buddhist deities.

Hence, if we recognise that there is some degree of integration of Buddhism and Mongolian culture, it was not because of 'Lamaist oppression of folk religion' (Heissig 1980:1) but rather a two-way interaction of Buddhism and indigenous Mongolian culture. Within this process, lama authors actually played a dual-role, as Mongolian and Buddhist monks. In this case, it is partly right to say,

A new development did take place, however, as a consequence of the contact of Lamaism with the old religious concepts of the Mongols. Old forms were taken up, modified and systematised through incorporation into a special literature in the Mongolian language (Heissig 1980:1).

However, it is more appropriate to say that this development has taken place in popular beliefs rather than in Buddhism. Buddhist deities were added to popular rituals in addition to the original spirits; overall structure, language and formulas of Buddhist ritual were added to original phrasings of lay rituals. Thus, popular rituals became more effective in the general Buddhist environment. Like the lay Mongols who became Buddhist but did not become monks, Mongolian popular rituals took up Buddhist features but did not become Buddhist services performed in the monasteries, and the local spirits were not included in the Buddhist pantheon.

Perhaps this is because of the Gelukpa-dominant Buddhism in Mongolia that earned strong support of the Manchu state, its close connection to Tibetan Gelukpa authorities, and Mongols' loyalty to Tsongkhapa and his teachings, Buddhism did not assimilate Mongolian indigenous religious forms, such as shamanism and other popular beliefs, as much as it did in Tibet.

2. Popular teachings

Mergen Gegen also wrote numerous poems and songs to popularise Buddhist doctrine amongst the lay people. Apart from the old print collected works, there is a large volume of literature under the name of the third Mergen Gegen, either in the form of manuscripts or as living tradition handed down to present. Some of them have crossed the border of Urad area and spread all over Mongolia.

Mergen Gegen's poetry and songs for teaching Buddhist doctrine can be grouped into two broad categories: didactic poetry and popular poetry, including songs.

Didactic poetry

Mergen Gegen is considered to be the first author of Mongolian didactic poetry, a major genre of poetry throughout the early twentieth century (Atwood 2002). He initiated a unique 'Mergen Gegen style' in Mongolian poetry (Möngke 1995: 496). The content of his didactic poetry covers all aspects of religious, social, political, economic, ethical and family life. In brief Mergen Gegen wanted to promote an ideal healthy, harmonious, prosperous and happy society in which would prosper his formulated Mongolian Buddhism. Through his didactic poetry, he teaches not only what is appropriate and beneficial, but also points out what is inappropriate and harmful to do. He criticises the behaviours that do not conform to Buddhist principle, and scorns, ridicules or mocks people's disregard of Buddhist doctrine. To take 'A Teaching on Maṇi' as an example,

It is difficult to cross the infordable sea
With a boat.

All the living beings in the world
Do not stay permanently.
As it is possible to go to
The bottomless hell,
Recite *om ma ni pad me hum*.

Water of the River Ganges
Can not be held in a gully.
Living beings in the world
Do not stay permanently.
As the cherished universe
Is definitely empty,
It is beneficial to recite
The six syllable mantra,
Om ma ni pad me hum.

Even if there is gold and silver,

They can not be food in hell.
 Even if there are beloved and favourite ones,
 They will not accompany you to hell.
 As you are to be alone
 When you depart,
 It is beneficial to do your best
 For the pure path of the white cause.
Om ma ni pad me hum.

[repetition of the same meaning]

No matter how long your hands are
 You cannot reach to heaven.
 No matter how brave you are,
 You cannot guard the world.
 No matter how wonderful it is,
 Our body is still empty.
 It is beneficial to recite
 The six syllable mantra,
 In one pointed faith,
Om ma ni pad me hum.
 [.....]
 Do not be excited
 For having the rich property of your father.
 Do not look down upon
 A beggar holding a bowl.
 Different karma
 Is the deposit of past doing.
 It is beneficial to think about
 Doing the pure white cause.
Om ma ni pad me hum.

Do not take pride
 In being rich and noble.
 Do not despair
 For being unprivileged.
 It is the dew of the night and morning
 For being rich, noble and happy
 For people in this world.
 Realise this principle
 And work hard for good cause.
Om ma ni pad me hum.

Learnt knowledge is permanent
 As it cannot be stolen by thieves and robbers.
 Karma is permanent
 As it always catches you without fail.
 Lower doctrine
 That mixes the truth with falsehood is weak.
 Love and intimacy
 That wears away like clothing is weak.
Om ma ni pad me hum.

The sunshine is eternal

Although it looks as small as a bowl.
 The power of dharma is eternal
 That educates all the living beings.
 The mirage
 That looks like a building is empty.
 The mind deeds
 That pursue profit is empty.
Om ma ni pad me hum (CW3: 224–229).

It seems that the following of Buddhist principles was a major norm of lay people's quality. For example, a poem titled 'Teachings on ethics' details all kinds of ethics related to people's life in a thousand lines. In it, firstly, Buddhist principles are paralleled to social ethics such as, a lama is to be respected as parents are; follow doctrine as state law; religious books are to be studied as other secular knowledge; abstaining oneself from killing is as beneficial as refraining oneself from other social offence; giving alms to the Buddhist community is as efficient as working hard and saving to accumulate wealth; generating faith in Buddhism, making merit as well as returning the favour of one's parents and doing good for other people; eliminating bad dispositions as well as confessing sins; improving literacy as well as taking religious initiations and instructions; read all kinds of books starting from Chinggis Khan's *oyun tülkigür* (*key of wisdom*)¹⁹⁰ to other saints' teachings, religious and secular laws, biographies of prominent lamas and khans; all kinds of knowledge and skills of home and abroad; secular and religious music; it is not necessary to attack and scorn different religions and different schools of Buddhism¹⁹¹ but appropriate to follow the *Gelukpa*; do one's best for both the state and Buddhism; disciples and servant and subjects are the same as one's sons and daughters; flourish of religion and state is same, prosperity of good cause and increase of good virtue is the same.

Then, the text stressed more on the value of Buddhism, such as, the Buddha's teaching is worthy; a saint lama's mercy is worthy; the alms given by a virtuous person is worthy; the grace gained through actual deeds is worthy; a saint is auspicious to his religion as a loyal official is auspicious to his state; as swans are ornaments in the lake, monks are ornaments in the assembly (service); it is certain for a rich to be happy as

¹⁹⁰ *Oyun Tülkigür* is a collection of didactic poetry that combined Mongolian oral teachings and Indo-Tibetan didactic poetries such as Nāgārjuna's *A drop of nourishment for people* and Sa-skya Pandita Kun-dga-rgyal-mtshan's *A treasury of aphoristic jewels: the Subhāṣitaratnanidhi*. As the main Mongolian source of it is *Chinggis-ün bilig* (*Wisdom of Chinggis*), the *Oyun tülkigür* also often goes under the name of Chinggis Khan as it is in the Mergen Gegen's work.

¹⁹¹ Here listed are Buddhism, secular state and heretics, as well as the different schools of Buddhism such as Nyingmapa, Sakyapa, Gelukpa, Kadampa, Karmapa, Sanggaspa (not known), Hua-shang and Bon pa.

certain for a holy person to become a Buddha; it is certain to go to hell after death as certain for a living person to die; one to refuses knowledge and doctrine to be a Buddha is as bad as one to abandon his parents for his own good.

And then, the poem instructs how to follow Buddhist ethics. For example, one gets a body of man due to his past deeds, so it is beneficial to seek further improvement through faults and mistakes, as Milaraspa achieved accomplishment through asceticism; If one believes in the three jewels and remembers the favour of his parents and does not violate state rule, even the king of hell can be merciful to him. Karma is an issue to take care of day by day; sexual passion is one to be cut off, wrong view is to be eliminated; faith is to be strengthened day and night as wealth is to be accumulated through constant hard work; Virtuous noble people give alms in a proper way while humble low people give alms for face and fame; while everybody knows death but still behave improperly as they wish; If one always does good, there cannot be bad result in the place of real judgment (hell); recite *Mañi* and Aiming at Loving Kindness (Mon. *Migdzem*, Tib. *Dmigs brtse ma*) in the morning and do meditation in the evening; Buddha and gods protect the ones who are honest, discriminate against those who are dishonest; One should consider the future life while still being a human; if one lives a sinful life, he will definitely get the seeds of the bad karma, but lives a virtuous life he will certainly get a merit to be ripen; if one practices tantra without fault, he will never be a hell being, hungry ghost, animal or demy-god. It is beneficial for one to confess the ten black sins; generating a compassionate mind is the root to be a Buddha; correcting one's mistakes and faults is the root to accumulate merits; one who generates a pure mind does not need to worry about having no result after death; the moon in the water and an image in the mirror are an analogy of emptiness.

After that, the poem scorns the ignorance of people, such as, it is extremely stupid to treat one's present life as permanent while knowing no one has eternity; How can accumulation of wealth be equal to accumulation of merit? How one who deceives with lowly means can escape from the law of karma? The arrival the envoy of hell is uncertain, being aware of it earlier is the precious teaching of holy masters; compassionate Bodhisattvas come to the world in a form of disguise to help ignorant living beings. In the end it advises people to realise that the worldly affairs in samsara are prone to destruction and take the good use of the present human body to follow the Bodhisattvas (CW3: 230– 297).

Thus, while Mergen Gegen wanted to educate the lay community in a healthy, efficient and prosperous way through his didactic poetry, he took Buddhist principle as the central factor. Apart from those poems that have exclusively Buddhist themes, all the other poems, no matter what themes they have, even the eulogies of local landscape, always contain some Buddhist contents. If we assume that the didactic poems were dedicated to the literate people who were normally the high class aristocrats in Mongolian society at that time, Mergen Gegen utilised popular poetry and songs to teach illiterate common people.

Popular poetry and songs

People in Urad Right Duke Banner still sing the songs which are considered to be compiled by the Third Mergen Gegen. It is said that Mergen Gegen compiled 81 songs, and that some people in the community could sing them all. *CW3* contains not only songs but also numerous poems that cover a wide range of contents, including philosophy of life, ethics, and all kinds of social and natural phenomena. Most songs convey Buddhist ideas, knowledge, ethics, feelings and passions through a plain language and simple style.

As these are lyrical, they are difficult to be categorised by subjects. Religious ideas and feelings are expressed through description, comment and remarks of all kinds of phenomena, issue and objects. Most of the song titles are given by the first sentence of the songs following the Mongolian custom. However, according to the general tendency of the contents, I categorise them into four groups: 1. Songs to transmit Buddhist knowledge and teachings, for example, 'Supreme Śākyamuni', 'Truly white virtue' 'Wheel of Samsara', 'Human life is difficult to obtain'. 2. Eulogies of Buddhist saints such as 'Benevolent Saint Tsongkhapa', 'The renown three saints ', 'The deliverer three saints', 'Lama Iokeśvara', 'Perfectly benevolent Lama', 'Vajradhara reincarnate saint', 'Victorious mighty Dalai Lama'. 3. Eulogies of Buddhist holy places and monasteries, such as 'Wise Mañjuśrī's place' (Utai Mountain), 'Place of Potala', 'Kūriye of the northern saint' (Ulaanbaatar), 'Badgar Choiling' and 'Supreme enlightenment' (Kumbum Monastery). 4. Approbation of Buddhist ethics and value. For example, 'Truly Three Jewels' 'The Sublime Three Jewels', 'Heaven of the Heaven', 'Master of the Teaching, Tsongkhapa', 'Accumulated Merit', 'Aspiration prayer made in the past', 'Great Virtue', 'Perfectly White-Merit', 'Supreme Lama', 'Blessings of

Supreme Lama', 'Holy Lama Father and Mother'. Many songs that have not a core subject also can be categorised into this group. In these songs, the deeds, endeavours, and virtues of Buddhist saints including Śākyamuni, Tsongkhapa, the Dalai Lama, and the Panchen Lama are recounted and eulogised and the most basic doctrine of emptiness, karma (both meritorious and sinful) and rebirth, rareness of human life, good use of human life, Buddhist ethics (ten black sins and ten white merits) and the benefit of following Buddhist teachings and venerating lamas are propagated. These songs not only convey knowledge to people but also create a general Buddhist atmosphere among the lay community. In addition to those openly Buddhist songs, other songs may include one verse or one line to express Buddhist ethics and principles.

Let me take a few examples for further illustration:

Supreme Śākyamuni¹⁹²

It is the supreme Śākyamuni Buddha,
Who descended from the place of Tushita,
To the lower world of Jambudvīpa,
And illuminated the whole of the world.

At the age of prime year of twenty nine,
He abandoned his ninety thousands companions,
And has taken the pure Śikṣāpāda [precepts],
In front of the blessed stupa.

At the bank of great flowing river,
He sat for six years in austerities,
Subdued the army of demons,
And gained the supreme enlightenment (CW3: 171–172).

The song thus summarised the life story of Śākyamuni in only three verses.

¹⁹² This song and the following two songs are among many songs sang by a group of old people which were recorded by Hurelbaatar on the occasion of the consecration of the newly-built 80 cubits (approximately 27 metres) statue of Maitreya in Mergen Monastery in 1992.

Human Life that is Difficult to Obtain

Human life that is difficult to obtain,
 Buddhism that is difficult to meet with,
 The early wish that is difficult to realise,
 The karma that is difficult to get rid of.

It is precious to make the ten white merits
 In cost of one's lifetime.
 It is precious to abandon the ten black sins
 In all the possible ways.

When the past karma that tortures you
 There is no use to lament.
 If you make merit now and later
 There will be happiness accumulated.

There is no lie in the order of the saints,
 There is no reality for enjoyment in other ways.
 The strict law that is to be followed carefully,
 One will go to hell if it is violated.

Always venerate in faith
 Your accomplished supreme lama.
 May you gain the indestructible *sidhi*
 And get to enlightenment.

It is beneficial to practise Buddhism,
 To tread the Bodhisattva path,
 To save the other living beings compassionately
 To work hard for attainment of Buddhahood.

May you be compassionate about all the living beings
 And enter the path of Avalokiteśvara,

Receive the blessings of Amita Buddha
And become a buddha in the peaceful land.

This is a song of wish for a person who has faith,
Ordinary words for a person who is an antagonist,
A meaningful song for a person who comprehends it,
Nonsense for a person who does not (CW3: 137–139).

This song tells people the preciousness of the chance of having a human body and meeting with Buddhism; Karma is unavoidable and it is beneficial to make merit and avoid committing sins. It also asserts that the principles have no fault but true. On the premises of this, the song advises people to practise Buddhism and follow the Bodhisattva path and attain enlightenment and Buddhahood. Thus, the song seems simple but contains a profound Buddhist doctrine. So the author tells that it can only be meaningful for people who have faith and the capacity to understand it.

Wheel of Saṃsāra

The turning of the wheel of saṃsāra,
Is fast like the wind.
The fruit of good and bad karma,
Ripens without fail.

Peaceful honest mind,
Is the root of ten white merits.
Resentful violent mind,
Is the cause of the ten black sins.

One's conception, birth, old age and death,
Are the immeasurable four seas of suffering.
Forgetting these while seeing
Is the unknowing ignorance.

One always gets lost

Because of laziness
 Stemmed from negligence
 In his youthful time.

How can one make the merits and practice [Buddhism]
 After he fall into hell,
 Due to his negligence
 In his good youthful time?

People who are born into
 The four seas of the Saṃsāra
 Are trapped by the anger and ignorance
 And the ten black sins.
 The wise great accomplished ones,
 Adept scholars,
 And the intelligent ones
 Are on the *Stages of the Path* (CW3:129–131).

This song also tells people of the rule of samsara, ripening of karma, sufferings of human life, and people's ignorance of not realising sufferings. As a result, people fail to practise Buddhism. The song advises people to act in their good youthful time and suggests them to further study *Stages of Path*. As it is in his didactic poetry, Mergen Gegen permeates religious meanings in all his other songs.

In general, the songs fully express the ideal world where Buddhism prospers and people live. Through these works, it seems that Mergen Gegen was able to infuse Buddhist doctrine into ordinary people's mind because most of these poems and songs have been passed down to the present day through hand copying and word of mouth.

Mergen Gegen also wrote three poems for easy-learning Mongolian script. They are 'A *angkha*' (A, the first), 'variations of Mongolian alphabets'. All are written in simple language and even rhymes that are easy to memorise. The purpose of writing these textbooks was, apart from encouraging Buddhist monks to learn Mongolian scripts as the other monk scholars did, could have been to enlighten lay people.

In brief, Mergen Gegen tried to enlighten and improve the quality of the whole community by his works of popular rituals and popular literature. All his attempts have contributed to popularising Buddhism among the laity, transform Urad Mongolian society into a Buddhist one, and make Buddhism truly rooted in the indigenous culture. Thus Mergen Gegen created a unique Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism that mingled together Buddhist community and lay community. In other words, the lay community became an indispensable part of the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism. Furthermore, Mergen Gegen's works on popular rituals and popular teachings have been so popular among all the Mongols that they have widely spread all over Mongolia through hand copying.

CONCLUSION

Buddhism in Mongolia was predominantly Gelukpa, and referred to by Mongols as 'Yellow Religion'. The Mongolian 'Yellow Religion' formed under Manchu political control and Tibetan spiritual dominance was diverse and independent in practice at the local level. The underlying structure of Mongolian Buddhism, such as construction of monasteries, number of monks in each monastery, identification of reincarnations and the administration of religious affairs were often subject to detailed rules issued by the Manchu court (Chapter 2). However, in practice, monasteries were often built locally without seeking permission from the state; the number of monks in monasteries was often much larger than that set by the state; reincarnations were not always chosen by drawing lots from the Golden Urn but selected locally, and they were often sought from the families of local nobles, who would then manage to avoid taking up duty in Beijing; Various practices of so-called 'red religion' (*ulaan-u shashin*) were in existence either within Gelukpa framework or separately in some places.

By focussing on the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism, the thesis illustrates how the indigenous dimensions of Mongolian Buddhism have evolved from its localisation to consequent diversification of practices. The major characteristics of the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism can be summarised as following:

Practical Orientation

The Mergen Tradition is practice-oriented, in contrast to the academic-orientated tradition, like Badgar Monastery. The core of the Mergen Tradition was tantric practices. The origin of the Tradition, Neichi Toyin's practices of Buddhism, was the Diyanchi tradition, i.e. yogin tradition. As shown in Chapter 3, Neichi Toyin did not confine himself to one monastery or monastic system, but practised the highest yoga-tantras, Vajrabhairava and Guhyasamāja Tantras in the mountains for 35 years, before he went to eastern Mongolia. There, he did not stay in monasteries or Buddhist centres, but travelled all over the banners teaching his method of Buddhist practices. Apart from teaching his disciples, he also taught lay people the secret mantras of the tantras. His aim in teaching secret mantras to ordinary people was to give them the propensity to Buddhist belief in future lives, rather than teaching them how to realise emptiness in this

life. The Mergen Tradition inherited and developed Neichi Toyin's tantric practices. Mergen Gegen established the Vajrabhairava Tantra as the major practice of his tradition through eleven texts covering all aspects of it. Even if the texts on the Vajrabhairava Tantra are a synthesis of other people's works, Mergen Gegen firmly established Neichi Toyin as the lineage guru of the tantra in his tradition. Apart from the main practice of Vajrabhairava Tantra, many other tantras are also practised according to Mergen Gegen's works. They can be seen from not only the tantric practices of the Mergen Tradition, but also from the programme of services and liturgical texts.

Mergen Gegen did not write doctrinal works, rather, provided the whole cycle of liturgies in Mongolian which ensured the effective monastic and local practice of Buddhism. As monastic services were held in Tibetan all over Mongolia, there had been not many monastic liturgical texts in Mongolian. Those translated by his predecessors were too literal and not suitable for chanting. Mergen Gegen wrote to meet the urgent need for continuation of the tradition. Although there is no record of how Buddhist doctrine was studied in the Mergen tradition, we can assume that they used the previously translated scriptures for their studies. There were however, no divisions of *ratsang* (Tib. *grwa tshang*) in Mergen Monastery as were in the other major monasteries. Still, some individual lamas' accomplishments are mentioned in doctrinal studies such as *lam rim*. For example, the First Chorji Bagshi often did contemplation on *lam rim* together with the second Mergen Diyanchi, and became accomplished in it. The third Mergen Gegen made the First Chorji Bagshi his lama, and also became accomplished in *lam rim*. Apart from mind training in *lam rim*, it seems that no philosophical or logical study was carried out in the Mergen Tradition. For doctrinal studies, disciples might study with their masters individually, as was the convention all over Mongolia.¹⁹³ Although a *lam rim ratsang* was set up in the West Monastery, this happened long after the third Mergen Gegen's time. The Manchu preceptor Jangjia Khutugtu stressed that Mongolian services were predestined in Urad Right Duke Banner, which means that even the authorities acknowledged the liturgical feature of the Mergen Tradition.

Mergen Gegen's institutionalisation covers monastic services, management and discipline. His collected works cover only liturgies and monastic regulations of the Mergen Tradition rather than syllabus of doctrinal studies. According to Pozdneyev,

¹⁹³ According to Pozdneyev, the young monks received teachings from their private tutors three times daily (1978: 195–198).

novices spent five to ten years learning the entire course of divine services, and many left the monastery and led ordinary lives afterwards. They only went to the banner or district monastery to perform divine services on the days of great *khural*. Having taken the *getsul* vow between the ages of fifteen–thirty, some chose special tutors to take *lung* (the authority to study, read and meditate on those particular teachings) and study higher doctrine. The main duty of *getsuls* was to perform daily services (1978: 197–204). This might be the same in Mergen Tradition. Ġaldanwangchugdorji mentions more than once that the monks who became accomplished often mastered Mongolian chanting first (1994: 186; 210). In some cases, monks from the Mergen Tradition went to other places, for instance, Badgar Monastery or even Kumbum and Tibet, to pursue advanced doctrinal studies. So it can be concluded that in the Mergen Tradition, as a banner level of Buddhist practices, the main training was confined to the first stage of teaching monks how to grasp the whole cycle of liturgies.

The Mergen Tradition is particularly practice-oriented in its use of the Mongolian language. If use of Tibetan in services made Buddhism seem foreign and detached from Mongol society, use of Mongolian brought Buddhism home and rooted it in Mongolian society. The reason of Mergen Gegen's creating systematic liturgies in Mongolian for monastic services was to make chanting understandable and harmonious. That is why he re-wrote some of the old translations into the pattern and rhymes of Mongolian poetry, and composed fitting melodies for them. That is why Mergen Tradition chanting not only attracted interest in other parts of Mongolia, even under the adverse conditions of the past, but also survived the political turmoil of the Cultural Revolution and continues to attract more interest in both Inner Mongolia and Mongolia.

Practice-orientation also revealed from the close relationship of the Mergen Tradition maintained with the local lay community. From Neichi Toyin onwards, the tradition was strongly orientated towards the lay community. This bond between Neichi Toyin and eastern Inner Mongolia became so strong that it continued until the communist era in China. Similarly, initiation of the Mergen Tradition, the establishment of Mergen Monastery, and the identification of early reincarnations of major lamas led by the Mergen Diyanchi were all instigated by the Dukes of Urad Right Duke Banner. Without consistent support of the Dukes, there might not have been a Mergen Tradition. However, because chanting was in Mongolian and Mergen Gegen produced works on popular rituals and teachings, the Mergen Tradition was able to effectively instil

Buddhism the minds of the common people and win their appreciation and support.

Unlike imperial monasteries and Khutuḡtu monasteries in Mongolia, banner and district monasteries depended on the local communities. The Mergen Tradition, therefore did not renounce the world, but directly served the worldly and spiritual needs of the lay community.

Mergen Tradition as indigenised Gelukpa

Mergen Gegen identified his tradition as a distinctive as well as authentic religion. Mergen Gegen constantly maintained that the religion he practiced was Boḡda Lama Neichi Toyin's Mongolian religion. He established Neichi Toyin as his founder lineage guru. He took Mongolian chanting and Vajrabhairava Tantra as important factors for Neichi Toyin's initiation in contrast to Buddhist practice in other parts of Mongolia. He claimed Buddhism was distorted before Neichi Toyin brought pure religion to eastern Mongolia. However, he was clear about his institutionalisation of monastic system; new translations and his creation of new chanting were innovative and distinctive from Neichi Toyin's practice. He even said, according to the colophon of CW1, 'tradition of my religion' when he gave a set of selected texts to the lama of Öljei Badaraḡsan Süm-e with a hope that 'his religion' would flourish in Khorchin.

On the other hand, Mergen Gegen clearly and firmly claimed the religion he practised was the Yellow Religion or Tsongkhapa's Religion. He did so through claiming Neichi Toyin as the second Tsongkhapa who disseminated the Yellow Religion in Mongolia. Neichi Toyin was named as the second Tsongkhapa, and therefore called Mañjuśrī Holy Lama, because Tsongkhapa was considered the earthly manifestation of Mañjuśrī. The main tantra, Vajrabhairava tantra which Neichi Toyin and the Mergen Tradition practised was the principal highest yoga tantras of Gelukpa, and the deity Vajrabhairava Yamāntaka was considered the wrathful manifestation of Mañjuśrī. The deities common among the different schools in Tibet were worshipped within the Gelukpa principles and framework.

The Mergen Tradition took *The Graded Path to Enlightenment* compiled by Tsongkhapa as the main doctrinal text studied in the Mergen Tradition. For example, Text I-9, Mergen Gegen's most important text for regulating the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhist practice, starts with

The [Mergen] monastery has spread Buddhism in all directions by constantly turning the three wheels. They are: 1) Wheel of deeds turned by all the senior and junior lamas and monks who stay in this monastery and carefully observe their respective vows and do everything in conformation with the rules. 2) Wheel of Dhyāna that is to meditate on the Graded Path of Sutra and Tantra in the summer and winter. 3) Wheel of Learning that is to listen and contemplate on the Graded Path of Sutra and Tantra in the spring and autumn. These are the most righteous factors for the extraordinary tenet of Tsongkhapa, the doctrinal king of the three realms (CW4 vol. I: 53v).

Through claiming the lineage guru and the tenet he followed, Mergen Gegen clearly declared the Buddhism he followed was nothing but the Yellow Religion, the Gelukpa School of Tibetan Buddhism. He wanted to neither set up a separate school nor go against Tibetan Buddhism. What he opposed was practising the Yellow Religion in Tibetan in Mongolia. He predicted that Tibetan Line of Buddhist practice would disappear in Mongolia sooner or later. So, only by practising Buddhism in Mongolian one could make Buddhism truly Mongolian and rooted in Mongolia.

However, Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism was not a 'curious copy of Tibetan Buddhism' in a 'degenerate and corrupt state' as seen at the start of the twentieth century (Siklos 1991: 156). No matter how Mergen Gegen wanted to make Buddhism truly Mongolian and rooted in Mongolian soil, the Buddhism he practised was Tsongkhapa's religion brought by Neichi Toyin to Mongolia.

Mergen Gegen tried to guard against any corruption to Tsongkhapa's religion or 'Yellow Religion' by keeping a clear boundary between Buddhism and popular beliefs. He did not want to take local deities or guardian spirits into the Buddhist pantheon. Those texts he wrote for local deities were at the request of others. He did not write them for monastic services. The absence of such texts in Mergen Gegen's regulation of monastic service supports this point. Neither Neichi Toyin nor Mergen Gegen took any local deities or any shamanic spirits (*onggud*) into the Buddhist pantheon. Guardian spirits that had been incorporated in Tibet were accepted by the Mongols as they were one of the components of Gelukpa when it first arrived in Mongolia. For instance, the master of earth or *luus* (Tib. *klu*) was very popular in Gelukpa already. So he was very cautious, even hesitant, about giving the local mountain spirit Mona Khan a Buddhist function and intentionally identifying him with Tibetan mountain deities *gnyan chen thang lha*, *rma chen spom ra* that were already in Gelukpa. Conversely, through his

popular ritual texts, he converted those local spirits to be 'lay Buddhist spirits' who have a new function of protecting Buddhism in their area (Chapter 7).

In brief, Mergen Tradition was a distinctive tradition of the Gelukpa that was truly rooted in Mongolian soil, becoming the organic part of Urad Mongol local community. However, it also exemplifies the local diversity of Mongolian Buddhist practices, and Mongols' efforts and achievements in indigenising Buddhism while not corrupting it.

National identity and the Mergen Tradition of Mongolian Buddhism

Elverskog (2006) who studied the process of the transformation of Mongol national, communal and Buddhist identity in relation to the Qing state based on Mongolian sources, concludes that Mongols identified themselves as Mongols of the Buddhist Qing. He points out, "Mongol identity was clearly multivalent and fluid during the Qing period" (11) and that "religion is part of a complex process of identity creation" (12). He pays special attention to the gradual transformation of cosmological frameworks, ritual, intellectual and bureaucratic practices, and to the historical and mythic narratives through which national identity is constituted based on the intellectual history of Mongol self-representations.

The mechanism of Buddhist conversion and community formation described by Elverskog can, to some extent, be applied to the identity formation of the Mergen Tradition and its corresponding community. Although Neichi Toyin converted the Mongols in eastern Inner Mongolia that included non-Khorchins, the Neichi Toyin Line of Buddhist practice later tried to expand itself to the larger community through the Khorchin nobles' ancestral lineage. While the Mergen Tradition was confined to a very small community in Urad Right Duke Banner, it identified itself as the Neichi Toyin's Mongolian religion and constantly tried to extend itself to a larger community through the Neichi Toyin Line. Mergen Gegen's ideal was to "transform the boundaries" of Khasarid "community ethnogenesis" for the future expanse of his Tradition.

However, the scale and nature of the Buddhist and communal identity of the Mergen Tradition are different from those described in Elverskog. Although Elverskog's investigation was also carried out on the bases of Inner Mongolian sources, he wants to show the transformation of the whole Mongolian national and Buddhist identity during

the entire Manchu Qing period. Because of the Mergen Tradition's diversion from mainstream Mongolian Buddhism—the Qing -promoted Tibetan Line—its religious and communal identity has always been outside the operation of the Qing ornamentalism. Qing ornamentalism united Mongol ulus through nobles descended from a common ancestor, Chinggis Khan. However, the establishment of Neichi Toyin's Mongolian religion was carried out within the Khasarid community, which was fluid but always centred around the Khorchin. The Mergen Tradition tended to identify itself with the Neichi Toyin's religion in order to expand its community base. Mergen Gegen even tried to reconceptualise the Khasarid community by expanding it to the Ögeled and Khoshud tribes in Kökenuur.

On a small scale, the Mergen Tradition survived and even thrived for some time due to its dynamic community base—the local Urad community and the Khorchin through the Neichi Toyin Line. The vitality of the Mergen Tradition rested on the belief in its true Mongolness, contrary to the Tibetan Line of Mongolian Buddhism. The Khasarid community conceptualised under this practice was to secure the continuation of the tradition under the overwhelming power of the Qing state and the Tibetan Line. That the Mergen Tradition was called the Mongol Religion within its community implies a hope to expand it to all Mongolia someday. In this sense, the Mergen Tradition promoted a pan-Mongolian national identity centred on the strong Khasarid lineage rather than weak and ornamentalised Chinggisid lineage.

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Appendixes

1. List of Mergen Gegen Lineage

Reincarnation	Name	Birth	Death	<i>Birth place</i>
First	Arigun Mergen Diyanchi Dinu-a	?	1680s	?
Second	Danjinjamsu	1680s	1716	<i>Urad Right Banner</i>
Third	Lobsangdambijalsan	1717	1766	<i>Urad Middle Banner</i>
Fourth	Lobsangdanjinjamso	1772	1812	<i>Urad Left Banner</i>
Fifth	Ishichoimpil	1814	1843	<i>Urad Middle Banner</i>
Sixth	?	?	?	?
Seventh	Ishibaldanchoiral	?	?	<i>Urad Right Banner</i>
Eighth	<i>Galsangdambijalsan</i>	<i>1898</i>	<i>1971</i>	<i>Urad Right Banner</i>

2. Neichi Toyin Lineage

Reincarnation	Name	Birth	Death	<i>Birth place</i>
First	Abida	1557	1653	<i>Torgud</i>
Second	Aḡwanglobsang -dambijalsan	1671	1703	<i>Minggan</i>
Third	?	1710 (enthroned)	1766	<i>Urad Middle Banner</i>
Fourth	?	1772 (enthroned)	1783	<i>Khorchin Jasagtu Banner</i>
Fifth	?	1790 (enthroned)	1811	<i>Khorchin Tüshiyetü Banner</i>
Sixth	?	1818 (enthroned)	1876	<i>Urad Middle Banner</i>
Seventh	?	1885(recognized)	1889	<i>Khorchin Da Güng Banner</i>
Eighth	?	1890	1940	<i>Khorchin Tüshiyetü Banner</i>
Ninth	?	1941	1995	<i>Khorchin Tüshiyetü Banner</i>

3. Jangjia Khutuḡtu Lineage

Reincarnation	Name	Birth	Death	<i>Birth place</i>
First	grags pa 'od zer			
Second	ngag dbang blo bzang chos ldan	1654(1642)-	1715	<i>Amdo</i>
Third	rol pa'i rdo rje, ye shes bstan pa'i sgron me	1717	1786	<i>Amdo</i>
Fourth	ye shes bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan	1787	1846	<i>Amdo</i>
Fifth	ye shes bstan pa'i nyi ma	1849	1875	<i>Amdo</i>
Sixth	blo bzang bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan	1878	1888	<i>Amdo</i>
Seventh	<i>ye shes rdo rje</i>	<i>1891</i>	<i>1958</i>	<i>Amdo</i>

4. Major Mongol khans and rulers

Name	Birth	Enthroned	Death
Chinggis Khan	1162	1204	<i>1227</i>
Ögedei Khan	1186	1229	<i>1241</i>
Güyük Khan	1206	1246	<i>1248</i>
Möngke Khan	1209	1251	<i>1259</i>
Khubilai Khan	1215	1260	<i>1294</i>
Dayan Khan	1464	1470–1517	<i>1543</i>
Altan Khan	1508		<i>1582</i>
Ligdan Khan	1588	1604	<i>1634</i>
<i>Güüshi Khan</i>		<i>1642</i>	<i>1655</i>

5. Manchu Emperors

Given name	Temple name	Reign name	Birth	Reign years	Mongolian Name
Nurhachi	Taizu	Tianming	1558	1616–1626	<i>Tengri-yin Boshugtu</i>
Huang Taiji	Taizong	Tiantsong	1592	1627–1636	<i>Tengri-yin Sechen</i>
Huang Taiji		Chongde		1636–1643	<i>Degedu Erdemtu</i>
Fulin	Shizu	Shunzhi	1638	1643–1661	<i>Eyeber Jasaḡchi</i>
Xuanye	Shengzu	Kangxi	1654	1661–1722	<i>Engke Amuḡulang</i>
Yinzhen	Shizong	Yongzheng	1678	1722–1735	<i>Nairaltu Töb</i>
Hongli	Gaozong	Qianlong	1711	1735–1796 (died 1799)	<i>Tengri Tetḡüghi</i>
Yongyan	Renzong	Jiaqing	1760	1796–1820	<i>Saishiyal Irügelü</i>
Minning	Xuanzong	Daoguang	1782	1820–1850	<i>Törü Gereltü</i>
Yizhu	Wenzong	Xianfeng	1831	1850–18 61	<i>Tugemel Elbegtü</i>
Zaichun	Muzong	Tongzhi	1856	1861–1975	<i>Bürin Jasaḡchi</i>
Zaitian	Dezong	Guangxu	1871	1875–1908	<i>Badaraḡultu Törü</i>
Puyi	None	Xuantong	1906	1908–1912 (died 1967)	<i>Kebtü Yosutu</i>